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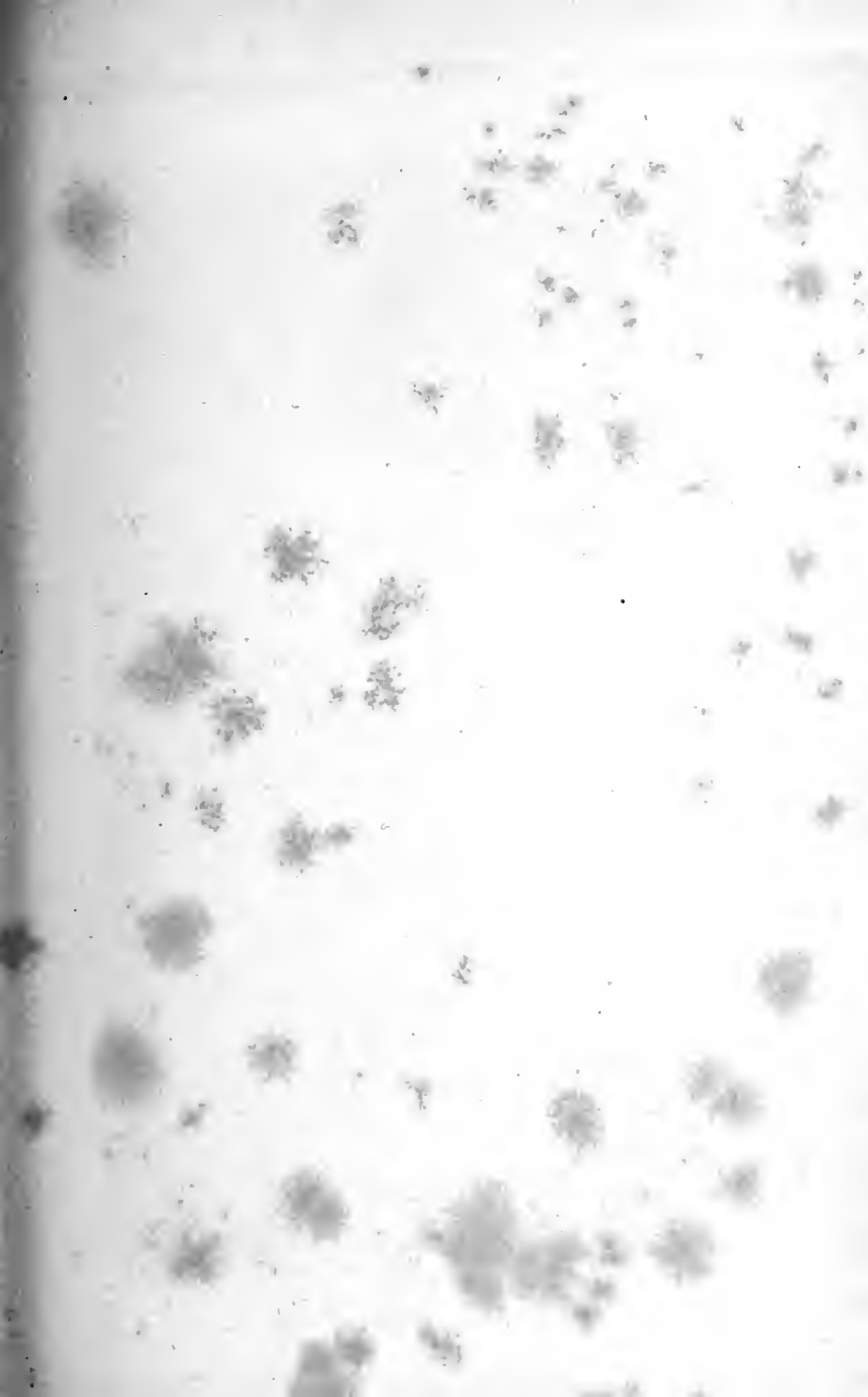
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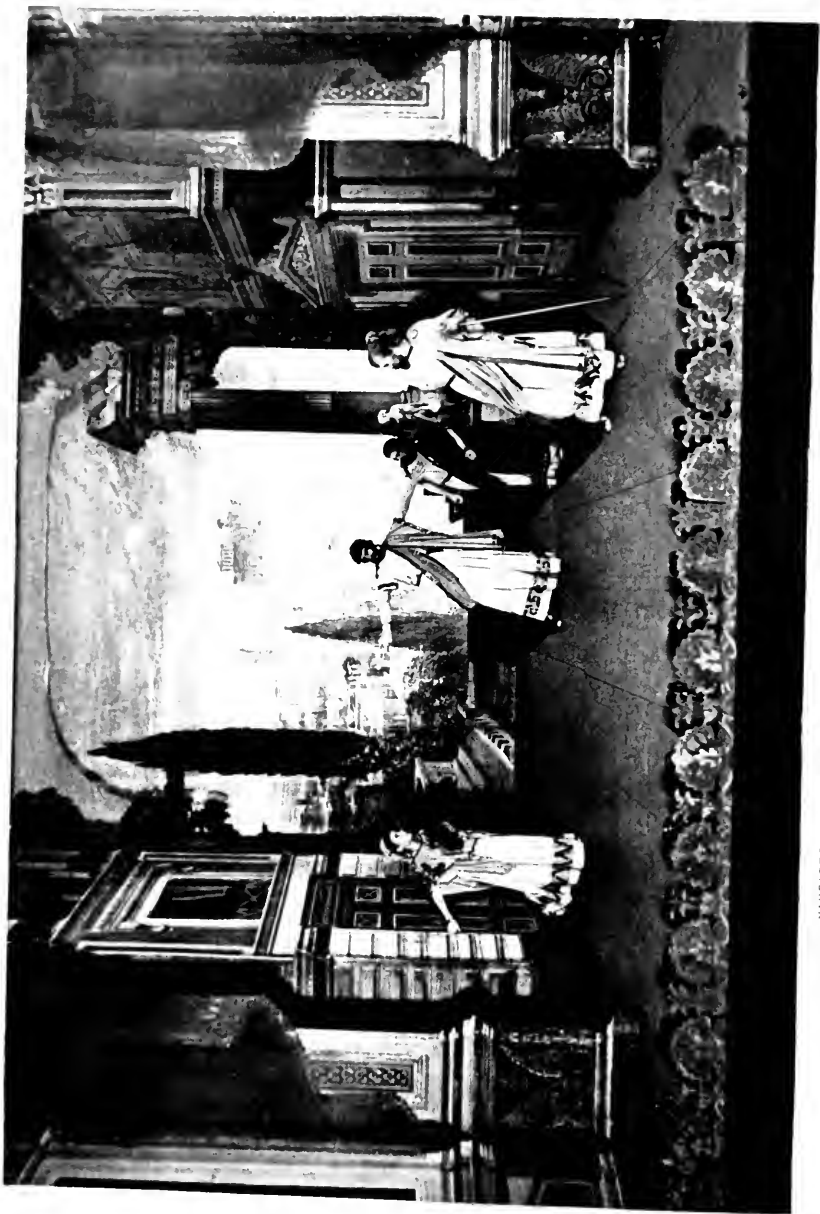




Amateur Clubs & Actors







NAUSISTRATA

PHORMIO

DEMIPHO

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PHORMIO. ACT V. 1896.

PHORMIO SUMMONS NAUSISTRATA TO INFORM HER OF HER HUSBAND'S DELINQUENCIES.

Amateur Clubs & Actors

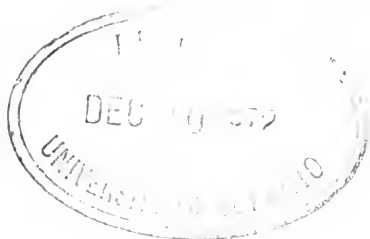
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TO THE HON.
SIR SPENCER PONSONBY-FANE, G.C.B.,

One of the Founders of the "Old Stagers,"

NOT ONLY AN ADMIRABLE ACTOR,
BUT ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE TRUE SPIRIT OF
AMATEUR ACTING,

WE, THE AUTHORS,
DEDICATE THIS BOOK.



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PROLOGUE

By REGINALD LUCAS

HAIL, Amateurs ! hail, lovers of the Muse
Of Drama ! Come, your story we'll peruse ;
Discover wherefore, with such fervent heart,
Unstirred by hope of gain you play your part ;
For mere delight why stamp, and mouth, and utter,
Since what's your sport to some is bread and butter ;
Why no rôle daunts you ; why with conscience clear
You dare rush in where actors tread with fear.
No sordid aim is yours ; no love of pelf ;
You take consummate pains for love of—self ?
I wonder if you'd misconstrue me were I
To say 'tis pleasant *digito monstrari* :
No effort yet to full achievement came
Without the whispered blandishments of Fame ;
Then, sure, when Art's your object sole and single,
Some love of Fame with love of Art may mingle.
I blame you not : what need to make excuse
For those who put their talents to good use ?
Here's one can sing : who wants to drown his song ?
Here's one can paint : who says his painting's wrong ?
One may not put to shame the nightingales,
He's therefore not obliged to stick to scales ;
And one, if no old masters he outshines,
Need not be kept for ever to straight lines.
I've heard the songs of amateurs applauded,
Thought they were right to sing, and wished that more did :
Indeed, t'ards amateurs indulgence stretches,
Sometimes, so far as to admire their sketches :

PROLOGUE

What then ! if these are able to give pleasure,
 By cultivating Nature's gifts at leisure,
 And find themselves in general admired
 By reason of the prowess they've acquired,
 Why should not those, who feel the aspiration
 For Drama, strive, within such limitation,
 Not trifling, but in earnest—(never was time
 Well spent in trifling yet at work or pastime)—
 To turn to use the talent that's within them,
 Look to the laurels and resolve to win them ?
 For my part I deem him a splendid fellow
 Who blacked himself throughout to play Othello :
 No London, no provincial town or borough,
 Can surely boast professional more thorough :
 He *felt* the part, and when the boards he trod he
 Became Othello, heart and soul—and body !
 That prince of amateurs may stand alone,
 No need to take his colour ; yet his tone
 Suits you exactly ; let it be conceded
 All honest players must go in as he did :
 And unto such as choose " to go the whole hog,"
 Be offered, as a tribute due, this Prologue.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the line of whom
 Bids fair to " stretch out to the crack of doom,"
 Most delicate the task upon me thrust is,
 How can I hope to do you all due justice ?
 Impartial commendation is the thing wished,
 Fit tribute to such names as are distinguished
 By honourable mention in these annals ;
 But truly there are few of this world's channels
 Down which they have not passed, and who shall group
 In orderly review so vast a troop ?
 First take the Stage itself : no meagre band,
 Brookfield and Elliot, Clark and Bouchier stand,
 Graduates all, who took a high degree
 Once in O.U.D.S. or A.D.C.
 Bouchier, old friend, those days are now " lang syne,"
 When at your smoking " My Dame " drew the line,

PROLOGUE

xiii

(As Elliot tells) : Ah, with what zeal we burned
Each Saturday when Pupil-Room was turned
Into a theatre : (*pace* Mr. Tarver,
'Twasn't *sub rosa* ; after some palaver
"The Head" had granted us our acting license) :
It may be we were artists in no high sense—
Your troupe I mean—yet you may well declare
As Actor-Manager you first "starred" there.
Swift-footed, nimble-witted, ready writer,
Dear Willie Elliot, chronicler, reciter,
No name finds mention in the book you edit
Reflecting on the Order greater credit :
You wear a shield won in a race at Eton,
Life's one long race, and may you ne'er be beaten !
In high official places next look round ;
What name is there more worthy to be found
Amongst the honoured ranks of G.C.B.
Than he who helped to found I Zingari ?
The old order changeth yielding place to new,
Of your old friends, Sir Spencer, not a few
Have left the stage for ever, yet be sure
Your fame and theirs is 'stabilisht and secure,
And still the famous legends shall be told
Beneath the banners of red, black, and gold.
Here's one who sometimes left the beaten path
To tread the boards with you, Sir H. de Bathe,
Well known as "Sergeant Bouncer," on half-pay ;
(General, late Scots Guards, also, by the way.)
Lord Harris, of your compeers none or few
Have been cast for as many parts as you ;
Cricketer, statesman, Governor of Bombay,
Courtier, and sportsman, actor, who can say
Their record is as full of "runs" as yours ?
Unless 'twere Yardley : he once made great scores ;
And now writes plays, wherein he still makes "hits" ;
A critic, too, who "cuts" bad plays to bits.
See, next, who wear the Church's reverend cloth,
Lawley and Adderley, famed actors both.
What soldiers, next, have faced the footlights' flare ?

All lines of fire they're ever prompt to dare,
For soldiers, surely, know what to be brave is,
And never audience daunted Newnham Davis ;
Nor gay George Nugent, Guardsman many sided,
Who once some excellent burlesque provided,
Now handles troops (at Islington) with skill,
Does many things, and never does them ill.
Barrington Foote and Liddell, Gunners twain,
Cum multis aliis swell the soldier's train.
In Politics, James Lowther, chosen rightly
To fill the Chair, draws crowded Houses nightly ;
Stage managers like him are seldom seen,
Who like "gag" better than a stirring "scene" !
Gravely intent upon affairs of State,
In comedy as apt as in debate,
See Bromley-Davenport ; sure no M.P.
Can touch life at more diverse points than he.
I scan the Civil Service and I miss,
Official now no longer, Quintin Twiss ;
Let's hope, though he's abandoned his Profession,
From Amateurs he threatens no secession.
Here's one, his colleague oft in days of yore,
Augustus Spalding, rich in theatre lore :
"Stagers" and "Strollers" these of large renown,
The high traditions careful to hand down,
The which to guard and carry on are summoned
Alan Mackinnon here, there Charlie Drummond ;
This one and that, (you'll find them in these pages,)
Called to prolong the tale to after ages.
My sense of courtesy may be aspersed
For disobeying this rule, "Ladies first" :
Yes ; but the reason it was disobeyed is,
Words fail me when I come to speak of ladies :
In such a case few things there are that women hate
Worse than a critic trying to discriminate.
Herein no wish to criticise is hinted,
To all alike my homage flows unstinted :
It may be I have my own predilection,
And think that one alone has reached perfection,

Endowed by Nature and enriched by Art,
 One in my humble judgment stands apart ;
 I name no names ; if I began commending
 Each one by name, this rhyme would have no ending.
 God bless them all ! long life to Wit and Beauty !
 For them to go on acting is a duty,
 That we may see life's limitations dwindle,
 Beneath the spreading ray bright fancies kindle :
 Potential heroines, may they extract
 Joy from real life, weep only when they act !

And what of those who've played their part, and seen
 Death's curtain fall ; whose memory is green
 As grows the grass upon their graves ? I wis
 We ask no kinder destiny than this :—
 To play each part assigned us with good will,
 Not envious, but ambitious, striving still
 To pluck from life its sweets, see all things fair,
 Bind fast the ties of friendship, prompt to share
 Prosperity with all, as prompt to give
 Aid in adversity, and so to live
 That on our tombs this epitaph may run :—
 "Here lies the friend of all, the foe of none."



AMATEUR ACTING

I

INTRODUCTORY

By THE EDITOR

OH for the pen of a ready journalist! In these days, when even "auld licht" ministers visit theatres and—whisper it not in Paisley—sometimes go behind the scenes and hobnob with ministerial managers and elders, I feel it not out of place to commence this chapter with a sort of paraphrase of that ancient canticle.

Amateur Acting! I know perfectly well how the ready journalist would dash at the subject: "The jovial, red-faced squire greeting his guests at the hall-door as they drive up." On these occasions the entire house-party arrive at the same moment. One may therefore infer that the strength of the squire's horses and the capacity of his carriages is unlimited. "Hearty handshaking in the porch. Entrance of the guests. The squire's aged wife bending over the hissing urn"—the only thing that ever hisses at amateur theatricals. "Arrival of the amusing man, who trips over the carpet and falls headlong among the muffins. Shouts of laughter from the entire assemblage except the squire's aged wife, who has to ring for more. The first rehearsal after dinner. The amusing man again to the fore, but

not quite so amusing as he was before dinner, when he was more thoroughly master of himself. Chastened laughter of the guests—the squire fuming—the squire's aged wife in tears. Gradual recovery of the amusing man, and a most successful rehearsal," &c. &c. All this, I feel, would be quite delightful both to read and write ; but unfortunately it has been discovered that the R. J.'s account of amateur theatricals closely resembles the shooting correspondent's story of "a day's snipe-shooting on the slopes of Helvellyn," *i.e.* it is entirely evolved from his imagination.

The real thing, whether undertaken by the organised amateur clubs, or by people staying in country houses, is very different. In the former there is a good deal of strict business, attention to and attendance at rehearsal, with a view to a complete performance of the play acted. In the latter, although one or two very serious people are generally to be found, there is a disposition to treat things much easier, whether a regular play or charades are being acted. Talking of the latter, I had the pleasure of taking part lately in a very hastily-arranged one ; the word being "Minister," and the final scene representing the first and last acts of Mr. Barrie's celebrated play rolled into one. The charade was performed without the kind permission of the Managers of the Haymarket Theatre. The Elders were represented by four charming young ladies, Babbie by a gallant and athletic seaman, and the Minister by myself. Babbie wore yellow hair and accordion skirts. The story, shortly, was, that the clerical one was quite prepared to flirt with Babbie to any extent, but drew the line at marriage, until informed that she was the daughter of a peer of the realm. Then, with the full consent of the Elders, who had all this time been burning dressing-

room candles in a wood composed of flower-pots, he consented, and all ended well.

After all, I believe this to be the true spirit of country-house acting, *i.e.* a kind of irresponsibility. I am sure it is a great mistake to take it too seriously, and to attempt to rival the carefully-prepared performances of the clubs. Now and then, if the company can be got together for at least a fortnight before the event, and if, more difficult still, they can be persuaded to arrive knowing their parts, the whole aspect of things is changed ; but, as a rule, one-act plays are by far the best, as they are easier to rehearse in a short time, and go much better than three- or four-act pieces. It would be a thousand pities, also, if the too serious one—by that I mean the individual who used to be in business, to shoot, fish, play golf and cricket, but who has given them all up for amateur acting—were to become very prominent in these amateur performances.

On coming, however, to the clubs and to a few houses where a regular system of amateur acting holds, one is met with an entirely different state of things. Let us for a moment look at the course pursued by the Old Stagers at Canterbury, Oxford, Cambridge, the Strollers at Windsor, and at places like Mr. Bromley-Davenport's in Cheshire, and Lord Dartmouth's at Patshull. In all of these, rehearsals are long and arduous—movements, delivery of sentences, and inflections are rehearsed time after time for periods varying from a fortnight to four or five weeks, and the result is generally to ensure smoothness and steadiness at the first performances. As an example of this, I shall never forget the first performance of the "Money Spinner" at Windsor about nine years ago. When one comes to look at it, it really is a remarkable thing that so many hard-worked people can be found in

all parts of the world who are willing thus to give up their spare time, and it is a decided testimony to the power and enjoyment of the art. Is there any one fond of acting who can deny the fascination of the Canterbury week? It certainly was a most happy idea of Sir Spencer Ponsonby, and the other founders of the Old Stagers, to combine cricket and the play. Given fine weather, what can we desire more than good cricket by day and the theatre at night? To be an Old Stager at Canterbury means something, for you are temporarily, if not permanently, a member of I. Z.; and whether you take part in the performances or not, there is no doubt that you spend a very delightful week. This is all the more true in my own case, for on the only occasion on which I appeared at Canterbury I was so pulverised by the local press, that for weeks after I was as dust upon the highroad to Dover.

It is the same with the Windsor Strollers. Who shall say that a man courageous enough to walk about Windsor, and attend football matches in the Field at Eton for a whole week with a green and red ribbon tied round his black billycock hat, is not a devotee of the art? Yet that is what the Windsor Strollers do in the murky November of each year. Who shall aver that the undergraduate at Oxford and Cambridge who will rehearse for five weeks on end before acting is not keen? Year after year, men who are busy will devote two and three hours a day to rehearsals for these club actings, and these men not in the first bloom of youth. Sir Henry de Bathe took part in a performance given by the Guards before Sevastopol. Look at the account given by Colonel Newnham-Davis of acting at Simla and in other parts, and how, a few years ago, the Brigade of Guards gave not one burlesque, but many, as recounted by Captain George Nugent. Take

the public schools. Mr. Tarver has a good deal to say on Eton acting between 1810 and 1870, when the school performances were stopped. The fact is, that the charm of amateur acting is irresistible.

I notice here that Mr. Tarver throws out a sly hint that Mr. Arthur Bouchier may be able to give some account of certain, as it were, unauthorised performances at Eton which took place at a later date. Well, Mr. Bouchier has risen to the bait, and so have I. I now append two stories of his and one of my own. On one memorable occasion it was decided by those Etonians who dwelt in a house not far from the School of Arms, to give a performance of the "Corsican Brothers." Mr. Bouchier organised this, and by kind permission of his Dame, *i.e.* House Master, the performance was to take place in the Pupil-room, which, as every one who has been at Eton knows, is a room singularly well adapted to the purpose. It was necessary to prepare snow in order to give due effect to the great duel scene in the wood, and one of the lower boys was hurriedly set to tear up the first paper he could find, as the hour was approaching. The performance went off with great *éclat*, and no one was louder in praise of it than the Dame, who expressed himself as being particularly impressed by the snow which was thrown on by the lower boy from behind a screen. After prayers, however, that night, just as the house was leaving the dining-room, suddenly "Stop a moment" came from the Dame, who was looking perturbed. "Can any of you boys tell me what has become of the Middle Division Trial Papers which I left on Pupil-room desk to look over? I cannot find them." Dead silence. Suddenly a good deal of pushing and stirring began at the lower end of the room, which eventually resulted in a pale-faced child

being thrust forward. "Please, sir," came a quivering voice, "the snow." "The what?" cried the Dame. "The snow, sir, for the 'Corsican Brothers.'" A veil now falls gently over that scene. It was, however, remarked, that half, by those in authority that the mathematics of Middle Division were evidently improving, as no one had failed to get through into Upper; and I understand that the astonishment of the mathematical masters at this unexpected event was even surpassed by that of many of the examinees.

On another occasion, this painful affair having blown over, Mr. Bouchier produced in the identical Pupil-room "Still Waters Run Deep." Again the Head of the House signified his intention of being present, and special pains were taken in rehearsal to get the great scene in the office right as regards what is technically known as "business." Those who know the play will remember that just as the virtuous John Mildmay is about to unmask the villain Hawksley he takes out a cigar, and is going to light it. The rest of this scene had better be given with the dialogue as it occurred on this particular occasion:—

Mr. Bouchier as Mildmay addressing Hawksley, and continuing a speech. "It so happened that, when the bill was presented for payment, only one person was in the counting-house—the clerk who paid the money, and is since dead. Will you allow me?" *Taking out a cigar-case.*

Voice from the audience. "Bouchier! no smoking."

B., taking no notice. "But in the private room of the firm, which was separated from the counting-house by a glazed door, was the junior partner—may I trouble you for a light?" *About to light cigar.*

Voice. "Bouchier! did you hear what I said? No smoking. It is not allowed at Eton."

B. "Please, sir, it's in the play."

V. "I can't help that. No smoking."

B. "But, *please*, sir, the entire rest of the scene depends upon a cigar now."

V. "Then you must omit the rest of the scene."

B. *in despair*. "Oh, sir, really"—*makes a desperate attempt to light cigar*.

V. "Bourchier, if I see you do that once more, I shall complain of you to the Head Master."

B., *fresh from a recent swishing, and moving uneasily on his chair*. "Oh, very well, sir, then we must go on without." The scene is finished without the cigar.

My tutor, too, was most kind about allowing us to act on Saturday nights. The rule at our House was, "on acting nights, the play which is to be acted at 7.30 P.M. in the House Library is not to be invented till 6.30 P.M. on the same evening." This sometimes produced the most surprising results, and unearthed a great deal of ready talent.

These actings went on for a year or two, but the death-blow came when we resolved one night to depart from the regular rule and produce the "Last Days of Pompeii," in classical costume, and in the upper passage. We were all draped in white and coloured tablecloths to represent togas, and wore on our heads—why, I know not—towels; all except Mr. "Jorrocks" Lubbock—now engaged in financial pursuits—whose headgear was an inverted flower-basket. But this was doubtless accounted for by the fact that he took the part of Pansa the Ædile. My running cups graced the feast at the house of Glaucus the Athenian, my part; and a small quantity of drawing-room lightning was brought into use to represent the Eruption of Vesuvius. Perhaps the most "striking" scene of all occurred in the Temple of Artemis, when the sly Pansa, lurking behind the statue, represented by the present Captain H. P. Levita, pushed him off his pedestal on to the top of Mr. "Jerry"

Streatfeild, who, in the part of the wicked Arbaces the Egyptian, was about to carry off the fair Nydia. He was squashed quite flat, and bears the marks of that statue to this day. The said Eruption of Vesuvius, worked by sheets of drawing-room lightning, was superintended by Mr. George Wyndham, M.P., the present Under Secretary for War, and the power of controlling fire which he showed on the occasion augurs well for his future in that responsible office. The effect of thunder, too, obtained through his knowledge of how to throw a tin bath all the way downstairs, was indescribable. My tutor witnessed this closing scene, the Destruction of Pompeii, with, I am sure, mixed feelings, as several Windsor chairs went in the crash ; and although he expressed himself as much interested in our noble attempt to represent the decadence of a great nation, he decided that in future we had better play at passage football instead of passage acting.

If, after all this, there should remain in any one's mind a lingering doubt as to the hold that amateur acting has taken in this country, I feel sure that a perusal of Mr. Lucas' prologue and the following chapters will entirely dispel the same. And I think also that most people will agree, that so long as a fatal excess does not creep in and produce that appalling being known as the professional-amateur, it is an excellent and healthy pastime, for among its many advantages it has one which stands out pre-eminently—it gives the leisured something on which to occupy their minds, and gives relief to the hard worked so long as they enter into it *con amore*.

Before concluding, I should like to explain that the fact of this book containing no mention of the many admirable London amateur clubs is due to the opinion we hold that these clubs deserve a special and separate history of their own.

II

THE GUARDS' BURLESQUE

BY CAPTAIN GEORGE NUGENT,

GRENADIER GUARDS

THE Guards' Burlesque was born early in 1888. Its father was a most respectable and hard-working assembly, entitled "The Grenadier Guards' Nigger Minstrel Troupe"; and its mother, a very pretty annual performance, called the "Coldstream Guards' Burlesque." The infant, however, soon eclipsed its parents in importance, which was not surprising, as it was a "Brigade" affair, and not confined to any particular regiment or battalion.

Acting in the Brigade is, of course, no new thing. Soldiers are always acting, for much the same reasons, I suppose, that induce so many actors to become volunteers. There is a far greater fascination in doing something that you are not paid for, and don't do particularly well, than there is in devoting yourself to your real profession, by which you earn your daily bread, and of which you may possibly know something. But it is, nevertheless, a capital thing for officers and men to be working together for one object, and without payment; it seems to do almost more than anything to bind all ranks closer together, and I certainly never saw the slightest sign of its being detrimental to discipline. When the common object is a theatrical performance, it is also

most useful in the cause of charity—though I am afraid we don't think of that much—and it is no doubt great fun to the actors; besides, we must never forget that there is always an off-chance that some among our audience may enjoy themselves, or, at all events, not be very much bored. Anyhow—whatever the reasons—soldiers have always been fond of acting, and the Brigade of Guards no less than the rest of the army.

But there had never been any organised system of giving dramatic or musical entertainments in the Brigade. Everything was left to individual enterprise, and, as a result, acting was, previously to the birth of the Guards' Burlesque, of a very intermittent character. At one time we had such amateur theatrical giants as Sir Henry de Bathe, General Henry Stracey, and the late "Kit" Pemberton; and the performances then were of a far too "legitimate" kind to be included in an article on "Burlesque."

After these there appears to have been nothing particular in the way of acting until poor "Baby" Boyle's time. He was in the Coldstream, and used to get up a burlesque every year until he sent in his papers and went on to the stage, where, after a very brief dramatic career, he caught a chill and died. He was a very good dancer, and mad-keen on acting, though I don't know that one could call him a very good actor.

Poor George Boyle! he was the kindest-hearted, most generous fellow I ever saw. His burlesques must have cost him something like £600 a year at least, and he did them "off his own bat" entirely for the amusement of the men. He used, it is true, to sell a few seats, but very few, and only at the rate of half-a-crown each, so that what he got back must have been a drop in the ocean to what he spent.

I remember a little anecdote about him which is very characteristic of his open-handedness. He always took an immense interest in the Westminster Hospital; and one evening, when he came in to dress for dinner, he said to his servant—a man called Read, and a bit of a character in his way, "Oh, Read, I saw a poor man brought into Westminster Hospital to-day without a coat to his back."

"Did you indeed, sir?" replied Read. "What studs will you wear this evening, sir?"

"Oh! never mind the studs, Read. Do you remember that coat I bought last November?"—mentioning one of his newest greatcoats.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, just take it round to the Westminster Hospital when I'm dressed, will you?"

"Very good, sir," replied Read, without moving a muscle of his countenance; then, after a pause, "I wish I was a poor man in Westminster Hospital, sir."

These burlesques were the work of one battalion (the second) of the Coldstream Guards; the company called themselves the "Star" Company, after the Coldstream badge; and the theatre in which the piece was given was always called the "Star" Theatre, wherever it was, whether at Chelsea, where we have a very comfortable little permanent playhouse, or at places like Wellington Barracks, Windsor, or the Tower, where a "fit up" has to be arranged in the gymnasium or schoolroom. At one performance in the schoolroom at Wellington Barracks, George Boyle had to erect a staircase out of doors at the back of the building, that being the only means of allowing the actors to get on to the stage without going through the audience.

As a rule, the characters were played entirely by officers and non-commissioned officers of the battalion, but on two occasions they were assisted by ladies—once when Mrs. Cecil Clay played Sarah, a Swiss Slavey, in “William Tell”; and once when Lady Augusta Fane played the heroine in “Villikins and his Dinah.”

They were helped by masculine outsiders—I use the term in the literal, not the offensive, sense—on three occasions; once by Captain—now Major—“Box” Stopford, who, though a Coldstreamer, was in the other battalion; once by the Hon. John Boscawen, who was not a soldier at all, but—being brother to Lord Falmouth, who till lately commanded the regiment—was made a sort of honorary Coldstreamer for the occasion; and once by Captain—now Lieutenant-Colonel—“Cis” Ricardo of the Grenadiers, who was the original promoter of the Guards’ Burlesque in its later and more developed form. The leading comedian was invariably George Boyle, and the leading comedienne a certain Colour-Sergeant Marsh, who was really a wonderful actor for a man who had never been taught the business. He used to play the old women extraordinarily funnily.

Well, when George Boyle had gone there was, curiously enough, no one who cared to spend an immense amount of time and a young fortune in money on these annual shows, and so, to the great regret of everybody connected with the Brigade, they ceased to exist, and we had to put up with the usual kind of military penny reading, got up as a sort of duty by the adjutants and the sergeants-major of the different battalions. Then “Cis” Ricardo started the “Grenadier Guards’ Nigger Minstrel Troupe.” The troupe was formed by the members of the whole regiment, without regard to battalions, and con-

sisted of between forty and fifty performers. We did, to the best of our ability, the regular black business, as you may see it at St. James's Hall. Indeed, I am afraid we used to crib most of our "wheezes" from the performance then going on at the Moore & Burgess Minstrels; but then, as we reflected, most of our audiences had not been there lately, and even if they had, it didn't matter much. Our orchestra was selected from the band and drums, and was by no means the worst part of the show.

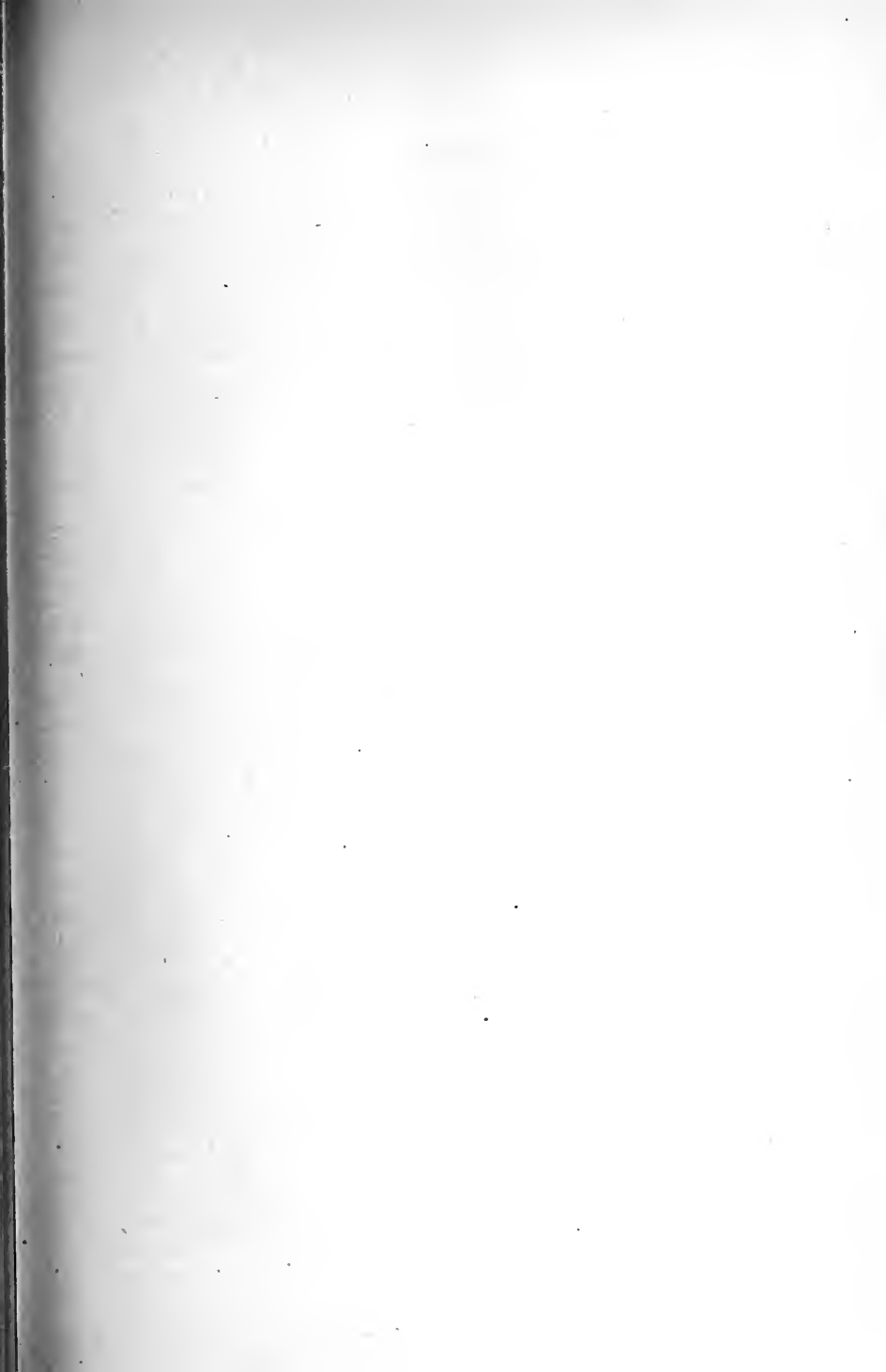
A nigger troupe is an excellent institution in barracks, because, having finished the "first part," which consists, of course, of songs and choruses, you can turn on anybody who has any sort of accomplishment, so long as he doesn't mind blacking his face. For instance, Sir Augustus Webster, who was always a shining light in all Brigade entertainments, used to do his famous Box trick in the second part of the Niggers. This trick was so remarkable that it deserves a word in passing. Gussy—"as we who loved him loved to call him"—used to be locked into a box, which was afterwards carefully corded. He then used to get out by means of lighting a match and thrusting the blade of a knife somewhere, which caused a panel in the box to move. At least this was the theory; the only time I saw the trick done it was a little different. Gussy was put into the box, and the orchestra, acting, no doubt, upon previous instructions, played the "Boulanger March" for all they were worth. Suddenly a light sprang up inside the box, and shone through the little breathing holes upon the expectant audience. It was, however, instantly extinguished, and a stentorian "d——n" rang out even above the clash of the "Boulanger March." Then another light sprang up as before, followed by sundry noises resembling the hanging up of pictures or

the beating of carpets, mingled with a considerable flow of uncompromising expressions, apparently intended only for the box, but distinctly audible to every one within about a hundred yards. After about twenty minutes or half-an-hour of this there was a mighty crash, half the box flew across the stage, and Gussy crawled out, coat-tails first, covered with blood, and with most of his hair singed off. However, the audience were much mystified and delighted, and the performance certainly served to eke out a considerable portion of the programme.

We always used to finish up the performance with a Nigger farce, in which Colonel Horace Ricardo—"Cis's" brother—was always the low comedian, and a first-rate one he was too.

Once we did a pathetic plantation drama. I forget the name of it, but it was all about a slave couple who had lost their child. "Cis" Ricardo was the hero, and Cecil Powney was the heroine. Powney, being a true artist, had been at great pains to give a feminine appearance to his figure. He had stuffed a whole lot of towels into the upper portion of his dress, hoping thereby to attain that symmetry of outline that we so much admire in the softer sex. Unfortunately he omitted to sufficiently tighten in his waistband, and the towels all slipped down. The effect might be described as distinctly promising.

It was while making up for one of these Nigger shows that "Cis" Ricardo suggested to me the idea of a "Brigade Entertainment Committee," by which entertainments for the men of the Brigade might be put on a more business-like footing. It was an excellent idea, and answered—and still answers—capitally. Sir Augustus Webster was the first secretary, and, as a consequence, the enterprise had a thoroughly good start. We collected subscriptions from





CAPTAIN GEORGE NUGENT AS WAGNER IN THE GUARDS'
BURLESQUE OF "FAUST."

From a photograph.

everybody, and settled dates for entertainments, which were organised once a week at one or other of the London barracks by different members of the committee, who were allowed a certain sum of money to cover necessary expenses. I was struck off the roster of "entertainers" in order that I might devote myself to organising a big burlesque about Christmas. I accepted this responsibility—with some misgivings, for I had not joined three years—and produced the first Guards' Burlesque, which was written by Captain Hobday of the Royal Horse Artillery, and Robert Martin, of Ballyhooly fame, and was called "Dr. Faust and Miss Marguerite; or, The Young Duck and the Old Quack." I had already played in it in Dublin, and knew how good it was, so I "squared" Bob Martin, who was most kind about it all, and so got permission to produce it. Bob Martin not only gave permission, but wrote up the play to suit us, and came and stage-managed it for us himself. The music was "specially composed and arranged" by poor little "Teddy" Solomon, who was always ready to give the best of his great musical talents to the service of the Brigade. Solomon was a most amusing little man. Like many artists, he invariably put off everything till the last minute, and then, when we were reduced to absolute despair, he would turn up at rehearsal with everything done—orchestration, band parts, copying out, everything—and tell us that he felt very ill, because he had been sitting up all night to do it. I can see him now standing at the piano, with his hat at the back of his head, a cigarette in his mouth, and his gloves on, playing divinely, and calling everybody who happened to be there—colonels, captains, and subalterns alike—by endearing abbreviations of their Christian names, and yet nobody ever took the least offence at it. Many of the

most successful of our songs were absolute impromptus, made up at rehearsal on the spur of the moment, although we were always expected to believe that they were the result of hours of careful composition. He was once grumbling to me about the amount of work he had to do. He said, "I've got a whole lot of songs which I must do before the end of the week; then I've got to finish up all your burlesque; besides, there's the piece I'm doing for the Savoy, and *I can't scamp that*,"—which naïve remark rather "gave away" his methods, as far as we were concerned.

Old Doctor Faust was played by Count Gleichen of the Grenadiers, who is now a most distinguished officer in the Intelligence Department and a C.M.G. He played the part exceedingly well; and when he was replaced by Young Faust in the person of Berkeley Levett, he cheerfully changed his clothes and make up, and retired into the chorus—an act of keenness that one would rarely find on the real stage!

"Cis" Ricardo was a most magnificent Mephistopheles, and looked, sang, and acted in a way that few amateurs could have equalled, and none surpassed. His brother, Colonel Ricardo, was Valentine, Major Stopford of the Coldstream was Siebel—the part he had played in Dublin with great and thoroughly deserved success—and I undertook, as in Dublin, the small part of Wagner, an "irresponsible low comedy" part, which, I am ashamed to say, rather suits me. I was offered one or two "shops" after this burlesque, one a three years' engagement at £40 a week, which flattered me very much at the time, but I am not sorry now that I resisted temptation and stuck to my original profession.

In my judgment the best performer among the lot of

us—the men, I mean—was Crompton-Roberts, who played Dame Martha. He looked such a charmingly clean old woman, and was intensely funny, without the slightest suggestion of vulgarity. He was the best masculine old woman that I have ever seen anywhere.

But the success of the show was due undoubtedly not to the men, but the ladies. Of these there were two principals—Mrs. Godfrey Pearse, the daughter of Mario and Grisi, as Marguerite; and Mrs. Crutchley—the wife of gallant Major Crutchley who lost his leg in Egypt—as Clochette, Marguerite's maid. Apropos of Mrs. Pearse, a rather pathetic little incident happened. It was arranged that we should all provide our own dresses, and Mrs. Pearse appeared in one which, although a very pretty one, she took a dislike to and wanted to change. I persuaded her not to go to the expense of a brand new one, but to come with me and see if we could not borrow one from Sir Augustus Harris, who was always most kind to us in every possible way. Having routed out the entire wardrobe at Drury Lane, we at last found a dress which we took to Madame Auguste, the costumier, and asked her to alter it in time for the performance that evening. This she said was absolutely impossible, she was afraid, but she would do her best, and Mrs. Pearse went into another room to have the dress tried on. When she had gone I said to Madame Auguste, "You know who that is, don't you? That's Mario's daughter." Tears started to the old lady's eyes, and in an awestruck whisper she said, "Is that Mario's daughter, really? She shall have a new dress if I die for it; and I wouldn't ask a penny from Mario's daughter." The dress arrived in good time, and was a real beauty. Mrs. Pearse sang charmingly in the part, and was so kind and patient with us all. Mrs. Crutchley, too, danced,

sang, and acted to perfection. It was owing almost entirely to the success of these two ladies that we *turned away* a sum of £800 in a fortnight.

We had a chorus of eight policemen (officers), eight ladies (all entitled to wear the Brigade ribbon, that is to say, they were all wives, sisters, or daughters of officers in the Brigade), and "eight soldiers of the Camel Corps" (non-commissioned officers). We had also a very clever Camel played by Sergeant Riley and Drum-Major Philip, both of the Grenadiers, besides a diminutive picquet, special constables, &c.

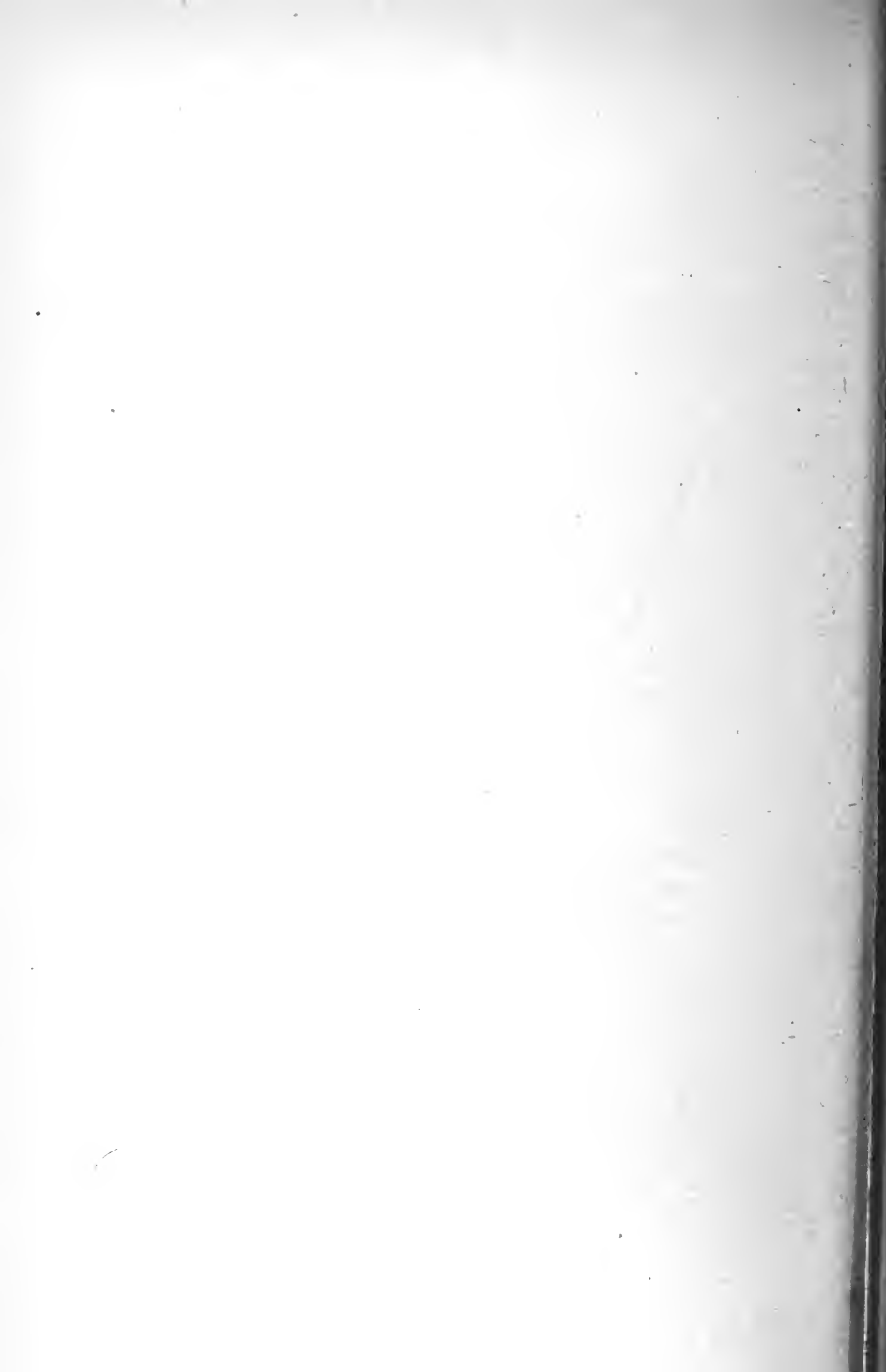
It was certainly a great success, and tremendous fun. We made enough to thoroughly do up our theatre, put the Entertainment Committee on a sound financial footing, and give a large amount to the Guards Industrial Home, and other Brigade charities. We used to have tremendous suppers, too, usually in barracks. These suppers, by-the-by, were *not* paid for "out of the profits," as some of the cheaper "society" journals used with more cynicism than accuracy to assert, but were owing to the hospitality of one or other of the actors.

Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge both honoured us by their presence, and stayed to supper on different occasions. Indeed, we hardly had any performance without some member of the Royal Family being in front; and here it may be well to say, that after some little experience in organising military entertainments of different sorts, I have always found that the easiest part of the whole undertaking is to enlist the sympathy and help of the Royal Family. We all know what a difference it makes to a charitable enterprise to receive the "patronage and presence" of Royalty; but I don't know that we half appreciate how very ready



MRS. CHARLES CRUTCHLEY AS CLOCHETTE IN THE GUARDS'
BURLESQUE OF "FAUST."

From a photograph.



they are to give it, and I know we can't appreciate the trouble and inconvenience it must often cost them. And what an audience they are! They are always punctual, they are always appreciative, and they always pay for their seats, and a lot more besides. In a word, they do an incalculable amount for the charity, and it is the charity that "vaunteth not itself."

Well, it was a great success no doubt; in fact, rather too great. The papers were all extremely kind, and we had the satisfaction of feeling that we had caused quite a nine days' wonder; but the worst of it was that the mothers and husbands of our fair artistes were somewhat of the opinion that the fame achieved by their talented relatives was not quite of the nature that they wished to have repeated, so next year we found that we could not get the services of the same ladies as before. We therefore tried a new experiment, and engaged professional assistance. Miss Kate Vaughan was good enough to give us her invaluable services as leading lady, and Miss Jeanie M'Nulty was second lady. The piece was a burlesque on "Ivanhoe," written by my father, Sir Edmund Nugent, himself an old Grenadier, and the music was, as before, by Solomon. We got most of the old lot of men together, with the addition of Sir Augustus Webster, who played Little John; George Macdonald of the Grenadiers, who was most admirable as Gurth the Swineherd; and Sir Hubert Miller of the Coldstream Guards, who played Wamba. The whole thing was a great success—indeed, monetarily greater even than the previous one, because we had two performances at Windsor, as well as one or two extra ones in London—and very enjoyable; but I think we all felt that, charming as the professional ladies were, it was better fun when our own "sisters and cousins and

aunts" were acting with us. "Cis" Ricardo played Brian de Bois Guilbert every bit as well as he had previously played Mephisto. Before "Ivanhoe" we put up "In Honour Bound," by Sidney Grundy, in which "Cis" Ricardo and "Gussy" Webster were both excellent as Sir George Carlyon and Philip.

In 1890 I was quartered in Dublin, and am therefore unable to speak from personal experience about the Chelsea Burlesque of that year. It was "Fra Diavolo," Byron's old burlesque, written up by "Bill" Yardley, the well-known author and cricketer, music, as usual, by Solomon, and dances arranged by Mr. Fred Storey. "Cis" Ricardo was Fra Diavolo, "Gussy" Webster, Sir Simpleton Simon, and Crompton-Roberts, Matteo; while the two brigands, Beppo and Giacomo, were played by George Macdonald and Colonel Horace Ricardo respectively. The ladies were amateur, and consisted of Miss Annie Schletter, Miss Rose Hawdon, Mrs. Meadows Taylor, and Miss G. Tancred.

Our next venture was "Robinson Crusoe," written by William Yardley. This performance was famous for the reappearance of Mrs. Crutchley, and for the appearance of the two Misses Savile-Clarke. The latter were the two beautiful daughters of the late Mr. Savile-Clarke, the well-known journalist and author. They created a very great sensation, as they were beautiful dancers, and very fair to look upon; moreover, they were, when made up, exactly alike. These three ladies were quite enough to "carry it through." The elder Miss Savile-Clarke is, alas! dead, and the younger is married to Mr. "Venus" Martineau.

The last burlesque we have played was "The Nick of Time," by General Sir H. Colville, K.C.B., at that time Colonel in the Grenadier Guards.

Perhaps I should mention that between "Robinson Crusoe" and "The Nick of Time" we produced that well-known drama, the "Ticket-of-leave Man," a production which disclosed the fact that we had amongst us one really good serious actor in the shape of Mr. Cecil Lowther of the Scots Guards, the brother of the Right Hon. James Lowther, Chairman of Committees. Cecil Lowther played Bob Brierly, and coached by Mr. Henry Neville, played it magnificently. George Macdonald played Hawkshaw and I played Jim Dalton. I merely mention this performance, because everybody would persist in calling it the "Guards' Burlesque," although of course it wasn't one really. Indeed, we always considered the expression a curious example of *lapsus lingue*.

III

THE WINDSOR STROLLERS

By B. C. STEPHENSON

ON Friday and Saturday evenings, October 30 and 31, 1857, a performance was given at the Theatre Royal, Windsor, in aid of the funds for the relief of the sufferers in India. The Mutiny had broken out in the Bengal Army in March of that year, the Relief of Lucknow had taken place in September, and Sir Colin Campbell, the new Commander-in-Chief, was due at Cawnpore in November. The Relief Fund had started in August, and the subscriptions, headed by the Queen, the Emperor Napoleon, and the Sultan, who gave £1000 each, amounted to so large a sum that, in December 1861, £140,000 had been distributed to sufferers in India, £100,000 to those at home, while over £245,000 remained for the benefit of widows and orphans. To this fund the officers of the Windsor garrison proposed to contribute the result of their performances.

The performers were all officers of the garrison, with the exception of the three ladies, Miss Rosse of the St. James's Theatre, Miss Fielding of the Theatre Royal, Olympic, and Mrs. Robertson of the Theatre Royal, Dublin. The Royal Horse Guards contributed to the caste Mr. Hartopp, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Carew; the Fusilier Guards, as they are described in the bill, Mr. Pemberton, Captain White, and Captain Paynter.

But the greater part of the work fell on the capable shoulders of Hartopp and Pemberton. The pieces produced were Morton's drama, "Our Wife ; or, The Rose of Amiens," "A Most Unwarrantable Intrusion," and "Boots at the Swan," one of Robson's best impersonations. Hartopp delivered an address. In the first piece he played Pomaret, and Pemberton, De Brissac. In the second they appeared together in the Duologue, and in the third Hartopp played Robson's part, and Pemberton appeared as Frank Friskly. The performance was a great success, one of the results being a substantial subscription to the Relief Fund, the other the start of the Windsor Strollers by Hartopp and Pemberton three years after.

A second performance took place before the Windsor Strollers finally settled down. The officers of the Household Brigade, "assisted by members of other amateur clubs," gave performances at the Windsor Theatre on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, November 23 and 24, 1859, in aid of the Windsor Dispensary. Captain Erskine, now Serjeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons, Mr. Ram, and Mr. Elwes, all of the Scots Fusilier Guards, and Mr. G. Webster, of the King's Dragoon Guards, were the military contribution to the cast, while from the Old Stagers and the Zingari came Mr. J. Palgrave Simpson, O.S.; Mr. Thomas Knox Holmes, O.S., I. Z.; and Mr. Albert Ricardo, I. Z., all of them to become later on members of the Windsor Strollers. Palgrave Simpson played Lavater in "Not a Bad Judge," T. K. Holmes Jeremy Census in "Anything for a Change," and Captain O'Scuttle in "Poor Pillicoddy." Albert Ricardo made his appearance as Zug in "Not a Bad Judge." Hartopp, now described as Captain Hartopp, O.S., I. Z.,

made a hit in "Pillicoddy," and Pemberton in "Anything for a Change," a great success as Swappington, a favourite part of Charles Mathews. The company had the advantage of the services of ladies who at the time were two of the most popular actresses on the stage—Miss Marston of the Olympic, and Miss M. Ternan of the Haymarket, who appeared "by the kind permission" of Mr. Buckstone, and sang a ballad called "Wake Me Not," written by Colonel Bruce of the Grenadier Guards. It may be said that these performances were specially remarkable for the appearance on the bill (it was a bill then—not a programme—a regular "ginger beer, oranges, and lemonade" bill) of a notice that the orchestra was composed entirely of amateurs, under the direction of the Hon. Seymour Egerton, for very much in the same way as the Windsor Strollers originated in the performances for the Indian Relief Fund in October 1857, did the Wandering Minstrels make their preliminary start at the Windsor Theatre in November 1859. There is so much to be said about this wonderful Society of Amateur Musicians, which, under the Presidency of General Sir H. P. de Bathe and the stick of Mr. Lionel H. Benson, celebrated its thousandth meeting in 1893, while its early association with the Windsor Strollers was so intimate, that it deserves from a Windsor Stroller more than a mere passing notice, and it is proposed to return to the Minstrels later on.

At last, in November 1860, the Windsor Strollers met for the first time at the Castle Hotel in the High Street, Windsor, and formed themselves into a society. The following were then elected members:—Captain Hartopp, O.S.; Captain Pemberton; Palgrave Simpson, Esq., O.S., and Thomas Knox Holmes, Esq., O.S., who formed the committee; the other members being Captain Erskine,

Captain Ewart, Grenadier Guards ; Captain Elwes, Captain Fearon, Captain Paynter, Captain Peel, Scots Fusilier Guards ; Mr. Ram, Mr. B. C. Stephenson, Mr. Gay Webster, 16th Lancers ; and Mr. Albert Ricardo, I. Z. Of these, all except Captain Ewart, Captain Fearon, Captain Peel, and Mr. B. C. Stephenson had already appeared in one or other of the preliminary performances. With the exception of Pemberton, the committee consisted of members of the "Old Stagers," and the rules of the new society were founded to a great extent on those of the older one.

Then on the 13th November 1860 The Windsor Strollers started their first season, and their first performance with "The Black Book," a melodrama by Mr. George Bentinck and Mr. Palgrave Simpson. It was a very serious affair. Miss Marston, who was the heroine, had been deprived of what the Windsor paper called "her patrimony, fame, and family *prestige*," by Hartopp, Peel, and Ewart. Their abominable plot was discovered, and exposed by Stephenson, who was "a conscientious lawyer," and Palgrave Simpson, who was a reputed idiot. The idiot's part was not a long or a difficult one. It consisted in answering "yes" or "no" to questions put to him by the conscientious lawyer, who wanted to find out where that black book was. But unfortunately in the theatre there happened to be the son of the Drum-Major of the Scots Fusilier Guards, who was reputed to be a highly intelligent boy. The Strollers were sure of their stalls and boxes, but, being a little uncertain of their gallery, Kit Pemberton sent the men of his company to fill it, and in their midst, in the front middle seat of the gallery, sat the highly intelligent boy. He had his instructions to applaud when he approved, and to laugh at anything funny. The men were to follow his lead. In fact he was, for that

night only, the leader of the "claque," and unfortunately in this capacity he made up his mind that a reputed idiot who never said anything but "yes" or "no" must be the funny man of the piece. Every time "Pal" opened his mouth to deliver his monosyllable, shrieks of laughter came from the gallery. In vain we sent round to stop the misplaced mirth. The highly intelligent boy was hemmed in by his delighted followers, and the result of it all was that "Pal" was so put out, that when the conscientious lawyer, after three acts, at last pointed to the safe in which the long-sought-for book was concealed, and asked whether it was there, the reputed idiot said "no" instead of "yes." The lawyer, however, fortunately knew that the book was there, because he himself had given instructions to a carpenter to hold it close behind the heavily iron-barred door which had no back to it, and so he took the negative answer for an affirmative one, Miss Marston got back her family "prestige," and the play ended happily. On the 14th, Miss Planché's charming one-act piece, "A Hasty Conclusion," was played, in connection with which the writer has reason to remember a personal sacrifice, which at the time he did not consider was sufficiently appreciated by his brother artists. The part of the Abbé le Bon demanded a clean-shaven face, and before dinner, on the day of the performance, with splendid self-denial, he applied the razor to his upper lip. At dinner no one noticed the change. At this performance Hartopp appeared for the first time as an author, and his piece, "Eclipsing the Son," in which he himself played, served to introduce Miss Louisa Thorne to our Windsor audience; Captain Fearon appeared also for the first time under the name of Mr. Fritz; and Mr. Seymour Egerton was there with his amateur orchestra, which, after

supper on the 14th, was formed into "The Wandering Minstrels."

In December of the same year the Windsor Strollers strolled for the first time to the Theatre Royal, Brighton, and General Stracey made his first appearance under the name of Mr. Harding Strax as Sam in "Lend me Five Shillings," and John in "Eclipsing the Son." In the same cast the Strollers took to their pseudonyms, Albert Ricardo appeared in the programme (our first *programme*) as Mr. Raymead. T. K. Holmes as Mr. Thomas Knox, B. C. Stephenson as Bolton Rowe, Kit Pemberton as Mr. Newton Kitts, Palgrave Simpson as Mr. Paul Grave, Captain Peel as Mr. Lemon, and Captain Fearon as Mr. Fritz. The performance was remarkable for a great success of Miss Louisa Thorne in "A Hasty Conclusion" and "Eclipsing the Son," and she joined Mr. Nye Chart's Company at Brighton at the end of the year. The arrangements behind as to property men and carpenters were not quite to the liking of one of our members, who, burdened with properties which did not belong to him, and harassed by the rapid movement of scenes which hit him in the back, complained to the prompter of the state of things. But he did not get much comfort out of his appeal, for all the prompter said was, "You should play 'Amlet and shift between, then you'd know something," from which it may be inferred that the prompter had played the mighty Dane under rather difficult circumstances.

In 1861 the Strollers added greatly to their acting strength by the election of Captain Henry Stracey, who had already appeared at Brighton, and Mr. Samuel Brandedram, afterwards the celebrated reciter, who now made his first appearance under his pseudonym of Mr. Lincoln

Lane as the Chevalier in "An Angel of the Attic," while, at the same performance, Miss Murray, of the Princess's Theatre, who afterwards became Mrs. Brandram, made her first appearance at Windsor as Mrs. Plummy in "How Stout you're Getting." The band, conducted by the Hon. Seymour Egerton, appeared for the first time on the programme of the Windsor Strollers as the Band of the Wandering Minstrels.

The second stroll of the Windsor Strollers was on June 10th of the same year to the Theatre Royal, Rochester, under the management of Mr. W. H. Swanborough, of the Strand Theatre, London. Hartopp was back at his post, and acting as Mr. W. Dalby; Miss Murray and Miss Ternan again lent their aid. But the performance is chiefly to be noticed for the appearance of Miss Kate Terry, of the Theatre Royal, St. James's, as Smart in "Who Speaks First?" and Mrs. O'Scuttle in "Poor Pillicoddy"; and there is her photograph in the Strollers' Book, and an excellent portrait it is now of that delightful actress, who in this year of grace 1898 is charming the audience of Mr. Hare's Theatre in Mr. C. Stuart Ogilvie's play, "The Master."

1861 was a year in which the Strollers were unusually enterprising, for in November they gave two performances, the Wandering Minstrels, under Seymour Egerton, providing the band, which made a total of five performances for the year, four of which took place at Windsor.

The performances in November 1862 introduced to our Windsor audience Miss Rose Leclercq, who appeared as Estelle Dumery in "The Isle of St. Tropez" (Montague Williams' and Burnand's drama), as Winifred in Palgrave Simpson's "Heads or Tails," as Gabrielle in "Tom Noddy's Secret," and as Ayesha in "Bare-faced Impostors," and is

still unrivalled in the class of parts which she has made specially her own. The Strollers had a great knack of discovering talent. On the second night, the 27th, our old allies, the Wandering Minstrels, played for us under the direction of Seymour Egerton for the last time.

In 1863, in addition to their usual performances in November, the Strollers gave a performance on December 11th, in aid of the funds of the Masonic Hall at Windsor, which was attended by the Freemasons in all the paraphernalia of their Order. The house was crammed, and, in the absence of the Wandering Minstrels, the music was provided by Messrs. Gunnis and Schrodes, two members of her Majesty's band, with Mr. Jolley of St. George's Chapel at the piano.

In 1864 "The Black Book" was repeated, the part of the drum-major's boy being omitted. On this occasion Miss Murray played Dame Asten, and it was Miss Rose Leclercq's "family prestige" that was menaced. Colonel Henry Hozier made his first appearance in the part of Baron Stolzeneck as one of the persons who menaced it, as well as in Harry Clinton in "Dearest Mamma"; and this year too Miss Hughes of the Theatre Royal, Strand, made her first appearance at Windsor; and so did Mrs. Leigh Murray, who came from the Olympic Theatre "by kind permission of Mr. Horace Wigan," and by kind permission "of the Great Western Railway Company," an enthusiast who had recently been added to the strength of the company missed the ordinary train, and took a special train from Paddington to Windsor in order to attend a rehearsal—price of train, £6, 10s.; value of services, £1 per week!!

The performances of 1865 were announced under the heading of "*Seventh Season!!!*" and took place on the

28th and 30th November. Most of the Strollers were in the bill, but two additions to the company had been made by Hartopp. A Mr. Calthorpe played Belgrave in "One Touch of Nature," Don Lopez Avila in "Where there's a Will there's a Way," and Frederick in Hartopp's "An Evening in Belgravia," while a Mr. A. Blount played Jones in "One Touch of Nature," and Surplus in "A Regular Fire." Mr. Calthorpe was Jack Clayton; and Mr. Blount was Arthur Blunt to those who knew him at home, and Arthur Cecil of German Reed fame, and "Peril" and "Diplomacy" renown at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre to those who knew him from the other side of the foot-lights. They were in management together at the old Court Theatre many years after their first performances in the theatre at Windsor. Best of good fellows, best of good friends, they were both taken away in the prime of life, but not till they had made a mark in the profession to which they devoted themselves after their early start with the Windsor Strollers.

"The Earl of Mount Charles and the officers of the 1st Life Guards gave a ball and a supper at the cavalry barracks." So said the Windsor paper, and added, "The invitations comprised the greater portion of the aristocratic patrons and patronesses of the Windsor Strollers." No wonder, because our astute manager, Hartopp, who knew of the ball, being afraid that invitations addressed direct to the houses in the neighbourhood would result in the people going straight to the barracks and returning their tickets and asking for their money back, which some of them had an amiable habit of doing, arranged with Lord Mount Charles that the invitations should be given in the theatre. So those who did not go to the theatre could not go to the ball. Billy was a great manager. In

this year the Strollers made Hozier a Stroller, not because he had taken a special to attend a rehearsal, but because he had proved himself a good actor, and that was an essential condition of election.

In November 1866 "The Light-house," by Wilkie Collins, was produced. Blunt turned up without the O, and was elected a Windsor Stroller, and so was Jack Fremantle of the 2nd Life Guards. The latter showed his appreciation of the honour by helping the Strollers out of a very considerable difficulty. The Windsor Theatre had been condemned by the authorities. Mr. C. A. Clarke, the sole lessee and manager, who had acted for some years as our stage manager, had given it up. There was much talk of pulling it down and using the ground for other purposes, when Fremantle came forward, rebuilt the theatre, and started it again under the responsible management of Mr. Thomas Townsend. It had undergone a complete transformation, which is just what it wanted ; but the Windsor Strollers had to wait nearly two years before they could go on with their performances. However, at the end of March 1869 everything was ready, and they began their ninth season on the 31st of that month. In the meantime, A. Bastard had joined in 1868. In order to make up for lost time there were three performances. But it was only the performance on the third day, the 2nd April, that was distinguished in any way from the others. For the first time an "Old Stager" who was not a "Windsor Stroller" appeared. He played Kester Chedzoy in "A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing," and he called himself Mr. S. Whitehead, O.S., but we all knew him to be one of the best artists that ever appeared on the amateur stage, and we learnt many a lesson from the performance. And so we

did from the artist who played Lord Churchill in "A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing." To those who do not know this delightful drama of Tom Taylor's, it must be explained that the scene is laid at Taunton in 1685, where Kirke with his "Lambs" is bullying the hero and heroine. Everything would go very wrong indeed if Lord Churchill did not turn up at the last moment to replace Kirke, and this is what Kirke has to say when Lord Churchill appears resplendent in scarlet and cuirass and feathers.

"My Lord Churchill! I am pleased to see your lordship." To which Lord Churchill has to reply, "Scarcely—when you know my mission." Now Churchill's entrance is quite at the end of the play, and it was impressed on the actor that he was to "get on"—which he did—and this was the result:—

Colonel Kirke. My Lord Churchill!—

Lord Churchill (rapidly, and with great decision). Scarcely.

Kirke, however, was quite equal to the occasion, and taking no notice of Churchill's denial of his own identity, promptly declared that he was pleased to see him. It was in this year that Captain Ives and Arthur Gooch, our future President, joined the Strollers as members.

In June of the same year the Strollers gave a performance at the Olympic Theatre for the benefit of the Children's Ward of the Convalescent Hospital at Clewer, at which they had the advantage of the assistance of Miss Herbert; and in November they started their tenth season with Captain Gooch for the first time in the cast. He appeared in "A Romantic Idea" as Rogueingrain (a tavern-keeper) and Grimbald (Count of Spectresheim). Who wrote "A Romantic Idea" is not mentioned in the programme. I regret to say that the Strollers about this

time had a bad habit of not giving the names of the authors of the pieces which they played. Perhaps they held the same opinion as Jack Clayton, who was standing on the evening of a first night at the wing of the Court Theatre waiting to go on in the new piece. The author was close by, and to him Jack said, "I feel a bit nervous." "So do I," said the author. "What are *you* nervous about?" said the manager. "Why, hang it all," was the reply, "I wrote the piece." "Do you think," said Clayton, pointing to the audience, "that they care a d——n who wrote the piece?"

1870 was a sad year for the Windsor Strollers, for "Kit" Pemberton played for the last time on the 29th April as Pierre Palliot in the "Follies of a Night." Hartopp, Stracey, Fremantle, Miss Rose Leclercq, and Miss Thorne were in the cast. But the winter performance was put off in memory of our dear old comrade, who was killed immediately after the battle of Sedan early in September.

It was strange that some years before he had appeared as Alonzo in the burlesque of that name, and had sung—

"Right through my head
A little piece of lead
Will cook my goose,
And it will be said
That I died in a Sally.
Then Sally come up," &c.

And he was shot through the head by some French soldiers who had taken refuge in a wood after the action was over, and when Colonel Pemberton and three officers of the Prussian Staff rode forward they halted within twenty yards of the Frenchmen, who fired and killed three of the party.

When "Kit" fell he was acting as correspondent to the *Times*, in which paper appeared on the 7th September 1870 his last letter, with the following heading:—"This letter will have a melancholy interest for the many friends of Colonel Pemberton, being the last he wrote." It contained so touching an account of a death as sudden as his own, that it may well bear repetition.

"I was during one part of the action standing near some hussars who were in reserve. The sun was pouring its rays upon us, and around us on every side lay the wounded. The poor fellows cried to them for water. 'Comrade! for God's sake, give me water—one little drop. I am on fire! I am on fire! For God's sake, give me one drop—only wet my lips.' And another near him could only hold up his hands in prayer, and point to his lips. A good-natured hussar, touched by the appeal, got off his horse, and ran to them with his water-bottle. He was in the act of raising the man's head when a shell fell within a yard, and blew the whole three to atoms. Whatever the poor hussar's faults in this world may have been, surely his kind action must atone for them in some way. The regiment moved off, and his horse followed in the ranks."

It was many weeks before poor Pemberton's body was found, and then it was only identified by a portion of the material in which he was dressed, by a brother officer, a Windsor Stroller, who had searched for him with affectionate perseverance. He was a great loss, and it was two years before any one was found to take his place in the parts in which he excelled. Colonel Henry Armitage and Mr. E. A. Place joined this year.

In February of 1871 the Strollers started their twelfth season, and for the first time a musical piece found its

place on the programme. The libretto was by B. C. Stephenson, W.S., and the music by Frederic Clay, O.S. It was called "Out of Sight." Miss Cole sang the part of Katrina, Mr. Dundas that of the Innkeeper ; while General Sir Heny de Bathe as General Villebois, Mr. Lionel Benson as Blancmange, and Mr. Quintin Twiss as Jacques, made their first appearance at Windsor ; Mr. de B. Holmes, the son of our old comrade, appeared also for the first time as Bonser in "The Goose with the Golden Eggs."

With the thirteenth season, which took place at Windsor in November of the same year, the Windsor Strollers made a new and a very happy departure. For a time the names of ladies professionally engaged on the stage disappeared from the bills, their places being taken by amateurs. In this case the word amateur merely meant that the ladies received no remuneration. Anything less like what was then considered an amateur than Mrs. Monckton, as she then was called, cannot be conceived. And she was most ably seconded by Mrs. and the Misses Hughes Hallett. Entering at once into the spirit which guided our management, she accepted and played on the first night, November 29, a part in a one-act farce, called "A Family Failing," and contributed with Gooch and Stracey to a great success. But it was on the second night, December 1, that she made her mark. The piece was an adaptation by Hartopp from a comedy in three acts by Emile Augier and Jules Sandeau, entitled "Monsieur Poirier." Our manager had put into it the whole strength of our company, and Mrs. Monckton's performance of the Marquise de Presles was a real triumph—the first of many. The adaptation was excellent. But Billy had written no tag, and had no time to write a tag, so

several Strollers tried their hands at something appropriate to the occasion which might be spoken by the Marquise de Presles at the end of the piece. There were a good many efforts. The best was—

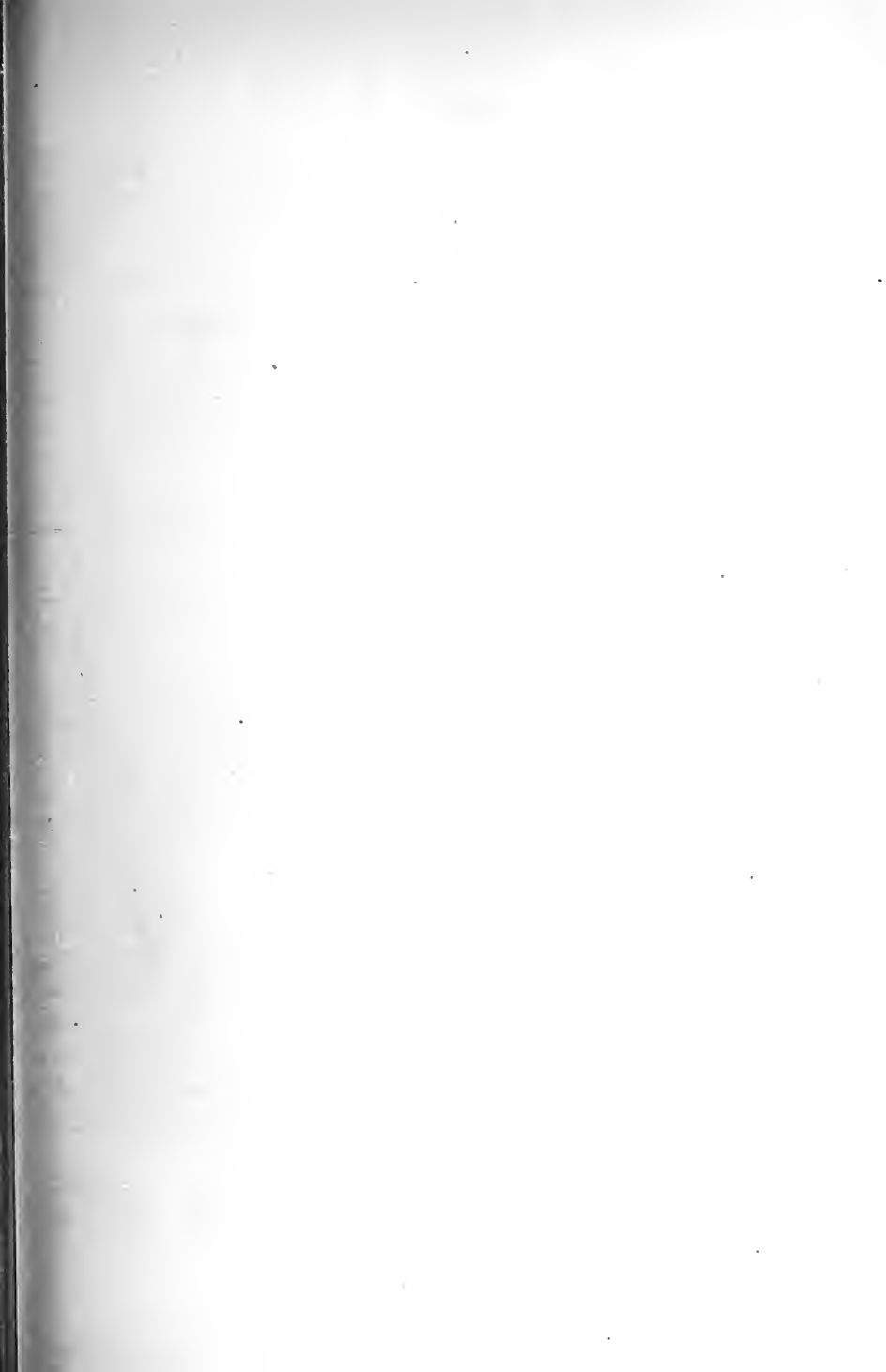
“The play is o’er, and we’ll no longer worry yer,
For here’s an end of me, and Mr. Poirier.”

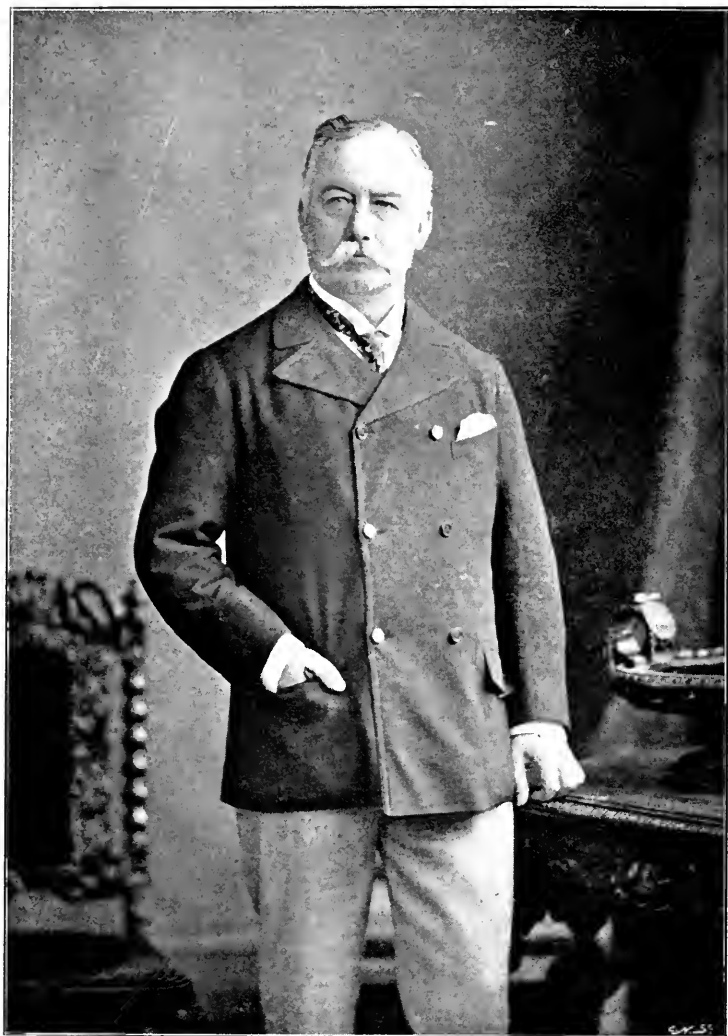
But it was rejected chiefly owing to the necessity of anglicising the pronunciation of the name of Poirier, to which the author objected.

Major-General Sir H. P. de Bathe, Captain H. Wombwell, Mr. T. E. A. Dolby, and Mr. Godfrey Pearce were elected.

In November 1872 Mrs. Monckton appeared as Miss Hardcastle in “She Stoops to Conquer,” with Mrs. Hughes Hallett and the Misses Hughes Hallett; Mr. Augustus Spalding was elected a Windsor Stroller; and the following season of November 1873 was remarkable for an excellent performance of “The Ladies’ Battle” and “London Assurance,” with Mrs. Monckton as the Countess d’Autreval in the former and Lady Gay Spanker in the latter, and with General de Bathe as Dazzle. Mr. Herbert Gardner made his first appearance as Christopher Larkings in “Woodcock’s Little Game,” in which Mr. Spalding played Woodcock, having already made his first appearance on the 25th as Hastings in Goldsmith’s comedy “She Stoops to Conquer”; Lionel Benson was elected, and Hartopp acted for the last time. He played Sir Harcourt Courtly in “London Assurance,” and Mr. Adolphus Swansdown in “Woodcock’s Little Game.”

In the year 1874 the performance was abandoned out of respect to the memory of the first President of





THE LATE CAPTAIN GOOCH, PRESIDENT OF THE WINDSOR STROLLERS.

From a photograph.

the Windsor Strollers. But in 1875 there was a meeting, at which Mr. Herbert Gardner and Mr. Alic Pemberton ("Kit's" brother) were elected members, and Gooch was unanimously chosen to succeed Hartopp as President. The members present were Gooch, T. K. Holmes, B. C. Stephenson, Gordon Ives, Peel, Albert Ricardo, Bastard, Spalding, Hozier, Dolby, and the two new members. And the sixteenth season was started with "Plot and Passion," and a strong caste, including Miss Carlotta Leclercq and Miss Augusta Wilton.

In December 1876 Mrs. Monckton returned, and the Hon. Lady Sebright and Miss Helmore played for the first time, Lady Sebright making her first appearance in "Cut off with a Shilling" and "The School for Coquettes." Mrs. Monckton, Lady Sebright, Miss Helmore, and Mrs. Gooch were elected lady members; and Mr. Hull, the Hon. F. A. Henley, Mr. S. S. C. Dolby, and Mr. T. de B. Holmes joined.

The next season, 1877, started in November with "The Wife's Secret," which introduced Sir Charles Young and Lieut.-Colonel Mildmay to our audience. It was a bold thing to produce a five-act piece in blank verse, and dangerous to invite comparison with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean in a piece of such high pretensions; but Gooch knew what he was about, and so did Young and Mrs. Monckton. Mrs. Monckton appeared in the same piece as Lady Eveline Amyott. The performance of the first night was brought to a close by "Betsy Baker," in which the Hon. Mrs. Wrottesley made her first appearance as the laundress, whose vivacity, eccentricities, and pattens Mrs. Keeley has made immortal. No one but Mrs. Wrottesley could have ventured to stand in Mrs. Keeley's pattens. The performance was so good, and its success so brilliant,

that the rest of the cast must be set down. They were Miss Helmore, who played Mrs. Mouser ; Mr. Bastard, who played Mouser ; and Mr. Spalding, who played Crummy. Altogether, it may be said that the eighteenth season showed a step in advance, an advance which was maintained in succeeding years. Colonel Mildmay and Mr. E. G. H. Bingham joined.

In November 1878 the Strollers again came forward as dramatic authors. "Our Bitterest Foe," by Mr. Herbert Gardner, W.S., and "Shadows," by Sir Charles Young, W.S. (he had been elected that year), appeared on the programme. Mr. R. R. Holmes was elected an honorary member in this year, and started as scene-painter to the Windsor Strollers. Mrs. Monckton and Sir Charles Young again scored a success in "Shadows," which was a romantic drama, in a prologue and four acts, written in blank verse. And "Whitebait at Greenwich" came as a brilliant contrast, with Twiss (his second appearance) as John Small, Gooch as Buzzard, Spalding as Glimmer, Miss Helmore as Sally, and Mrs. Wrottesley as Miss Lucretia Buzzard. In this year Mrs. Wrottesley became a member.

In 1879 more romantic plays. "A Son of the Soil," in four acts, by Herman Merivale, with Sir Charles Young and Mrs. Monckton in the principal parts ; and "Play," by Robertson, in which Mildmay and Spalding greatly distinguished themselves, and so did the lady who played Rosie Fanquhere, who, having learned from the Chevalier Brown that his wife was dead, got mixed up with a preceding line and asked, "Where is she now?" Twiss and Nevill were elected.

In May of 1880 the Strollers made one of their rare strolls to Queen Anne's Mansions, where they played for the benefit of the Convalescent Hospital at Windsor.

the Windsor performance in November, "For her Child's Sake," another play by Sir Charles Young, was produced; and Edmund Yates came down to see the production of "Black Sheep," a play which he had written in collaboration with Palgrave Simpson, and which was founded on his novel of the same name. Mr. F. Foster and Mr. C. P. Colnaghi were elected members, and Corney Grain was elected an honorary member.

In December 1881 Sir Charles Young was again to the fore as an author with a comedietta, "That Dreadful Doctor"; and he and Lady Monckton added to their laurels by a magnificent performance of "Clancarty," Tom Taylor's play, in which Mr. H. S. Riddell played King William III.; Mr. C. C. Clarke, Sir George Barclay; Mr. F. C. Bentinck, Lord Woodstock; and Mr. C. G. Allan, Scum Goodman—their first appearances. Mr. C. C. Clarke was elected a Windsor Stroller.

In November 1882 Mr. Herbert Gardner produced his comedy in three acts, entitled "Jim will Tell," in which he played the part of the Duke of St. Lozels, and Mr. Charles Drummond, Mr. Claude Ponsonby, and Mr. Eustace Ponsonby appeared for the first time. There was new scenery by R. R. Holmes, W.S.; and the places of the lady amateurs were taken by Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Hoystan, Miss Reynolds, and Miss Kate Bishop. Mr. F. C. Bentinck, Mr. C. G. Allan, and Mr. C. W. A. Trollope were elected. In December there was another stroll to the Londesborough Theatre, Scarborough, which, although the Strollers took the best of their company and the most successful of their pieces, was not altogether successful from a pecuniary point of view.

In 1883 Lady Monckton made her last appearance with the Windsor Strollers. On Wednesday, 28th November, she

played Lady Dedlock in Palgrave Simpson's drama "Lady Dedlock's Secret" (founded on an episode in Charles Dickens's "Bleak House"), and on the 30th she played Mrs. Colonel M'Cann in Tom Taylor's "Up at the Hills." Sir Charles Young played with her the principal parts in both pieces, and he bade his farewell to Windsor in the character of Major Stonehurst, in Tom Taylor's comedy. Mr. Charles Drummond, Mr. Claude A. Ponsonby, and Mr. Eustace Ponsonby were elected.

In 1884 the meeting in November was chiefly remarkable for a performance of "Cox and Box," Burnand and Sullivan's *Triumviretta* as it was called, by Mr. Quintin Twiss, Sir Henry de Bathe, and a gentleman who appeared for the second time in a musical piece at Windsor under the name of Mr. S. Whitehead; Lionel Benson was at the piano. The other pieces were "The Guv'nor" and "Married in Haste," in both of which the Strollers had the benefit of the assistance of Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, who appeared as Carrie in the first and as Ethel Grainger in the last. Mr. J. B. Westropp elected. In 1885 the theatre was not available, as it was wanted by its owner, Mr. Richardson Gardner, for political meetings in anticipation of the general election which was then expected. But in 1886 the Strollers had their usual season in November, when Mr. Alan Mackinnon as the Hon. Tom Stanhope, and Captain Liddell as Colonel Trevanion, made their first appearances in "The Glass of Fashion"; and Mr. Arthur Bouchier was introduced to the Windsor audience as Viscount Glycerine in "Cyril's Success." Captain A. F. Liddell joined. In 1887, however, again there was no performance, as the theatre, which had been condemned by the borough surveyor, was closed by the owner, who sold it to Mr. G. H. Long.

Mr. Long at once set to work to satisfy the requirements of the authorities in a very complete and elaborate manner, and in November 1888 the theatre was ready for the Windsor Strollers' twenty-seventh season. Mr. Mr. C. W. A. Trollope undertook the stage management for the first time. Mr. Derrick's farcical comedy "Confusion" was the principal piece, and it was repeated in December at a performance given by the Windsor Strollers in aid of the Eaton Mission at Hackney Wick, in the West Theatre of the Albert Hall. Mr. Arthur Bouchier and Mr. E. H. Whitmore were elected.

In 1889 there was a very successful performance of Mr. Cecil Clay's "A Pantomime Rehearsal," in which Mr. W. Elliot made his first appearance as Jack Deedes, the Manager and Author, and the Ladies' Orchestra played for the first time under the direction of Miss L. Blair Oliphant. Miss A. M. Mackinnon and Miss G. Nugent were elected.

The Windsor Strollers' work in 1890 began with a performance in March at Melton Mowbray, in aid of the Farmers' Benevolent Institution.

"Bombaste Furioso up to Date" was the principal feature of the Windsor season of that year. Eustace Ponsonby, C. Drummond, and Nugent, with Miss Lizzie Henderson to help them, succeeded in making a great success.

In 1891 Mr. Charles Thomas's farcical comedy in three acts, "The Paper Chase," was produced, with Miss Carlotta Addison as Pedder, Mrs. Charles Sim making her first appearance as Mrs. Pomfret in the same comedy. Sir Augustus Webster made his first appearance, and was elected.

In 1892 Mr. Pinero's farce in three acts, "The Magis-

trate," was produced with a very strong cast, and Mrs. Charles Sim made her second appearance at Windsor. She played Mrs. Marsham in "A Naughty Novel," as Angela in "A Show of Hands," and as Anne Carew in "A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing." The Strollers were again fortunate in securing the services of a very distinguished amateur actress.

The season of 1893 was chiefly remarkable for the absence of the President's name from the bills; for although he presided at the meeting, the malady to which he eventually succumbed had made fateful progress, and he was unable to be present in the theatre. He had served the Strollers faithfully, and ruled them with singular judgment and success. His first appearance had taken place in November 1869, and from the date of his election as President, in succession to Hartopp in 1875, he had only been absent from one meeting at Windsor during a quarter of a century. He had played fifty-four different parts in the various performances, and he was one of the best and most popular actors that the society ever possessed. Firm and fair, he was singularly free from prejudice, and nothing is more remarkable in the record of the many parts which he played than the fact that they were so frequently subordinate.

It was impossible to believe that our cheery companion was to leave us so soon. But on January 4, 1894, a letter addressed to Spalding, the senior acting member, and written in his usual handwriting, full of manly resignation, announced that the end was near, and bade a tender farewell to his old comrades, with a blessing from "Goochie." He died on the 11th, and many of us followed him to his grave in the Windsor Cemetery at Shital. There was no performance that year; but in June the

Windsor Strollers held a meeting, at which Mr. Augustus Spalding, the senior member, presided, and the members present unanimously elected Mr. Charles Drummond as President.

One of the first acts of the new President was the framing and printing of the rules of the Society. The law had hitherto been unwritten, and it now set forth in print that the President should be responsible for the choice and casting of plays, that he should control the finances, subject to an annual statement to each active member, that candidates should prove their fitness as actors for election by appearing at least in two seasons, while their social qualifications should be tested by a unanimous vote of members present at the election. The adoption of the dramatic profession disqualifies a Windsor Stroller for active membership, but he is eligible for re-election as an honorary member.

In November 1895 Drummond started management with Mr. Pinero's farce "The Schoolmistress," in which Miss Lizzie Henderson played the part of the Principal of Volumnia College with great success. On the second night Mr. Carton's "Liberty Hall" was produced; Mrs. Charles Crutchley made her first appearance at Windsor in it as Blanche Chilworth, and established before a delighted audience her hereditary right to a conspicuous dramatic success. She was elected a Windsor Stroller.

In November 1896 Mr. Outram Tristram's "Red Lamp" was performed, with Mrs. Charles Sim as Princess Claudia Morakoff, Mr. Bromley-Davenport playing for the first time as Rheinweck. And on the second day "The Passport," by B. C. Stephenson, W.S., and W. Yardley, O.S., was produced after "Hester's Mystery." Mrs.

Crutchley played the part of Mrs. Darcy inimitably, and it was hard to believe that the piece was being played by amateurs.

In November 1897 "The Idler," by Haddon Chambers; "The Burglar and the Judge," by Philips and Brookfield; Pinero's "Sweet Lavender"; and "Breaking the Ice," by Charles Thomas, gave ample opportunity for Mrs. Crutchley and Miss Lizzie Henderson to repeat their triumphs—and the Strollers completed their thirty-fifth season at Windsor.

Although started with the idea of strolling elsewhere, the Windsor Strollers have done most of their work in the royal borough. In thirty-eight years only seven times have they given performances elsewhere—at Brighton, in 1860; at Rochester, in 1861; in London, at the Olympic Theatre, in 1869; and again in 1880, at Queen Anne's Mansions; at Scarborough, in 1882; in London, at the Albert Hall, West Theatre, in 1888; and at Melton Mowbray, in 1890. But they have been very faithful to Windsor. Only for special reasons or under circumstances beyond their control have they ever omitted their annual performance at the Theatre Royal. Since 1860 they have missed only six times—in 1867 and 1868, when the theatre was being rebuilt; in 1874, when their President (Hartopp) died; in 1885, when the theatre was required by the proprietor for political meetings; in 1887, when the building was condemned by the authorities; and in 1894, when their President (Gooch) died. In their thirty-five seasons they had given eighty-eight performances, and produced one hundred and sixty-eight plays. The records of these performances show how singularly fortunate the Presidents have been in the selection of the ladies whose services have so materially contributed to their success,

selections which were, of course, made long before the artists arrived at their ultimate prominent positions on the stage.

Lady Monckton, Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, Miss Kate Terry, Miss Herbert, Miss Murray, Miss Ternan, Miss Louisa Thorne, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Emily Cross, Miss Annie Irish, Miss Kate Bishop, Miss Augusta Wilton, Miss Rosina Filippi, Miss Edith Chester, Miss Mabel Millett, and Miss Lizzie Henderson, have all of them appeared professionally, with the exception of Lady Monckton, who appeared as an amateur ; while as regards amateurs, in addition to that most talented lady, the Strollers can show on their bills such names as those of the Hon. Mrs. Wrottesley, Mrs. and the Miss Hughes Hallett, Mrs. Charles Sim, and Mrs. Charles Crutchley. From the ranks of the Strollers Arthur Cecil, C. G. Allan, Arthur Bouchier, and Willie Elliot went to distinguish themselves on the English stage. That excellent actor, Jack Clayton, performed with the Strollers once, but they did not think him good enough. They were mighty particular. Mr. Samuel Brandram, one of the most remarkable reciters of his time, was a Stroller, and so was Corney Grain. There have been authors too amongst them—Palgrave Simpson, Hartopp, Sir Charles Young, Herbert Gardner (now Lord Burghclere), B. C. Stephenson, and “Kit” Pemberton, novelist and *Times* correspondent. There were very few idlers, and most of them still are busy men, which accounts possibly for an enviable power of playing the fool when they get the proper and legitimate chance, which occurs after the banquet.

THE BANQUET

One of the leading features of the Windsor season is the banquet, and the entertainment which invariably follows it on the "off night."

To be easily amused is a most precious gift. It involves no expenditure. It calls for little effort on the part of the entertained, and for less on the part of the entertainer. This priceless gift the Windsor Strollers possess in an eminent degree, and liberally share with their guests. For the night of the banquet is a guest night; the dinner over and the "loving cup" passed round, an adjournment is made to the Club Rooms; the fooling begins with a procession, which partakes of an official character. The President, sometimes attired as Phœbus Apollo and sometimes as Guy Fawkes, is attended by a motley crowd, who enthrone him. The new members are led up to him, and receive the "acolade" with "rise, brother Stroller," while a convenient poker descends upon the shoulders of the new member. Then the evening's entertainment starts. Charlie Clarke, with conjuring tricks and inimitable banjo performance; Armytage, with a comic account of an Egyptian campaign; Allan conducts a party round the field of Waterloo; two Strollers give an impromptu performance of sham Shakespeare, and a guest wants to know which play their recitation comes from; Arthur Blunt sings "Maria," and sits for his photograph; Claude Ponsonby presides at the piano; Charles Colnaghi and Eustace Ponsonby extemporise a burlesque, while Nugent sings comic songs to an accompaniment of his banjo. Then late in the night the guests retire, and the Strollers wander upstairs to their respective bedrooms; not, however, till one last story has been told by

an ancient member. How they all laughed at it! One by one they hammered on their doors, and repeated the point of the joke. One singularly appreciative soul broke into the early slumbers of the drowsy crowd by opening his door and shouting it down the passage. Then the Strollers slept the sleep of well-earned repose. The next morning two energetic souls who had risen with the dawn and ordered breakfast at eleven o'clock, questioned the wit of the wonderful story, and being unable to arrive at any certain conclusion determined to submit it to the independent judgment of the average intelligence. With this intention they started to make purchases at six shops in the High Street, the story to be told alternately during the transaction of the deals. The result showed either that the average intelligence of the Windsor High Street is below the ordinary level, or that tradesmen do not joke at twelve o'clock, or that the Windsor Strollers are more easily amused than most people; for the expedition resulted in the expenditure of 2s. 6½d. on a chop, a herring, a piece of flannel, a doll, a bun, and a box of pills. But nobody laughed.

THE LADIES' ORCHESTRA

At the performance on Tuesday, November 26, 1889, the band of the ladies' orchestra appeared for the first time. Gooch had the great fortune to enlist the services of Miss Lilian Blair Oliphant, now Mrs. Gregson Ellis, who brought together and conducted an orchestra composed of the following ladies:—Lady Katherine Coke, Lady Sybil Knox, Miss Hale, Miss Crutchley, Miss M. Ellison, Miss Blair Oliphant, Miss E. Blair Oliphant, and Mrs. Bogle. It was twenty-seven years since the Wandering Minstrels' last performance at Windsor, and the ladies' orchestra took

a permanent position on the programmes of the Windsor performances, recruited from time to time by some of the best amateur lady musicians of the day—Mrs. F. Liddell, Miss Lambert, Miss Magdalen Ponsonby. In 1891 Miss Blair Oliphant resigned the stick in favour of Mr. Claud Nugent, with Miss Liddell at the pianoforte ; and in 1893 the band was strengthened by the addition of Miss H. Hale, Miss M. Hale, Miss Ida Nutt, the Hon. Mrs. C. R. Spencer, and Miss Ponsonby.

In 1895 Miss Stone, Miss F. Coutts Fowlie, Miss M. Coutts Fowlie, Miss K. Goodford, Miss M. Taylor, and Miss Hussey joined.

THE WANDERING MINSTRELS

Although the Wandering Minstrels did not form themselves into a Society until 1860, they owe their origin to a performance which took place at Windsor in November 1859, and which the officers of the Household Brigade gave in aid of the funds of the Windsor Dispensary. The late Hon. Seymour Egerton, afterwards Lord Wilton, who was at that time an officer of the 1st Life Guards, appeared with an orchestra composed entirely of amateurs, amongst whom were eight future members of the Wandering Minstrels besides himself—Lord Gerald Fitzgerald, Mr. d'Egville, Mr. Breedon, Mr. Fred Clay, M. le Patourel, Mr. A. B. Mitford, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Val Morris. And the following compositions by the members of the band were played :—"A Romance Dramatique" for the cornet, written by Mr. Egerton for Mr. A. B. Mitford ; "A Serenade" by F. Clay, a valse by the conductor, and a galop entitled "Windsor Revels," written by Lord Gerald Fitzgerald.

On the 13th November of the following year, 1860, the same performers, under the same conductor, appeared at the first performance of the Windsor Strollers.

The band consisted of, among others, the following:—

E. A. Breedon.
Fred Clay.
Gordon Cleather.
A. Davis Cooper.
S. H. Curtis.
Capt. H. P. de Bathe.
L. d'Egville.
Hon. Seymour Egerton.
Lord Gerald Fitzgerald.
Viscount Grey de Wilton.
Nicholas Hanhart.

Henry le Patourel.
Sir A. K. Macdonald.
A. Mendes.
A. B. Mitford.
Val Morris.
Richard Pritchard.
Henry Robley.
H. E. Tatham.
W. L. Turner.
Fred Wetherall.

After supper it was suggested that, as there was no *purely* Amateur Musical Society, those then present should start one, consisting of instrumental and vocal members, with the object principally of playing for charitable purposes. The idea was immediately taken up, and the nucleus of the Society then and there determined, the Earl of Wilton being President, the Hon. Seymour J. G. Egerton, Conductor, and Mr. A. B. Mitford, Hon. Sec. *pro tem*.

In a short time the Society really had a being. At first it adopted the somewhat punning title of "The Banditti"; but afterwards, at the suggestion of Tom Taylor the dramatist, christened itself "The Wandering Minstrels," and held its weekly meetings at the Freemasons' Tavern, where, after the musical part of the business had been gone through, the members adjourned to supper. Shortly afterwards one of the members, Lord Gerald Fitzgerald, a keen, all-round musician, thinking that it would be better for the Society to have a home of its own, at his own

expense built a handsome music-room at the back of his house at 47 Sloane Street, and there the Society initiated the *Smoking Concert*, now a thing of everyday occurrence, but at that time quite unknown. The orchestra, at the end of the room, was decorated with all kinds of quaint pictures, arms, and curios, books of prints, &c., on stands, and chairs, and tables on the floor, the latter with bottles and glasses on them; and upstairs, at the back, a gallery, where Lady Gerald used to entertain her friends. Everybody who was anybody at that time in society, art, literature, or music was to be met with at these pleasant gatherings; and besides the music of the band and the books and curiosities and the bottles and glasses on the tables, there were provided, carrying on the old supper notion at the Freemasons' Tavern, oysters and stout. At that time Seymour Egerton was conductor, and his brother, Lord Grey de Wilton, who played the kettledrums, was afterwards followed by Lionel Benson (the present Conductor), and the now President, Sir H. (then Colonel) de Bathe, played the side drum. In 1881 Lord Gerald Fitzgerald, through failing health, was obliged to close his room and give up his membership, though not before he had succeeded the Hon. Seymour Egerton, who, as Conductor, had retired in 1874.

The first of the Smoking Concerts took place at 47 Sloane Street in July 1862, and they have been continued since 1881 in the Grosvenor Hall, and although shorn of much of their old attractiveness and interest through being held in a mere ordinary concert room, they still appear to be appreciated. The Wandering Minstrels were the first to start the Smoking Concerts, which have been initiated all over the kingdom, but, ever anxious for originality, they devised a new plan for the

comfort of their visitors, with the result that the waiter, generally slow and frequently rude, was done away with altogether, and the wants of the guests are now personally attended to by their hosts themselves ; and though other people have followed their lead in one respect, nowhere else in London can be seen the picture of a crowd of visitors receiving their refreshment in the shape of whiskeys and sodas, &c., from the hands of the President of the Society entertaining them ; for General Sir Henry de Bathe, with other members of the Society, stand behind the bar, and personally serve all their guests—no light task, considering that the visitors at these Concerts generally number close upon three hundred. The Smoking Concerts are, however, but a secondary matter really in the history of the Society. It had two principal aims, viz., to play for charitable purposes, and to be entirely and purely amateur ; and the aspirant for the honour of belonging to them had, besides, to satisfy the Society that he was not only a good player, but it was incumbent upon him to be also a “good fellow.” Both rules have been rigidly complied with, and only occasionally, when at the last moment some member of the band, only in the wind department, has been unfortunately prevented by illness from occupying his usual post, has it been temporarily filled by a professional man. Of no other so-called Amateur Society can this be said, for in most, if not in all of them, the principal desks are held by professors.

The idea of giving concerts for deserving charities has been more successfully carried out than could at first have been imagined, for during the thirty-eight years the Society has been in existence it has realised nearly £17,000 in the cause of charity.

The largest amounts ever made were in 1864, when

two concerts—one for the Brigade of Guards Industrial Home—realised together the noble sum of £980.

The following is a list of the Windsor Strollers, with the dates of their first elections :—

PRESIDENT.

C. Drummond, 1883.

ACTIVE MEMBERS.

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| A. F. M. Spalding . . . | 1872 |
| R. R. Holmes (Scene Painter) | 1878 |
| Q. Twiss | 1879 |
| Captain A. F. Liddell . . | 1886 |
| A. M. Mackinnon | 1889 |
| Captain G. C. Nugent . . | 1889 |
| Captain Sir A. F. Webster . | 1892 |
| C. Lambert | 1893 |
| W. F. Fladgate | 1894 |
| Lt.-Col. N. Newnham-Davis | 1894 |
| W. H. Leese | 1894 |
| A. J. Tassell | 1894 |
| H. R. Bromley-Davenport . | 1897 |

HONORARY MEMBERS.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------|
| B. C. Stephenson | 1860 |
| Major-General H. Stracey . | 1861 |
| Colonel H. Hozier | 1865 |
| Lt.-Col. W. Armytage . . | 1870 |
| General Sir H. P. de Bathe . | 1871 |
| L. Benson | 1873 |
| Lord Burghclere | 1875 |
| Colonel H. Mildmay . . . | 1877 |
| F. C. Bentinck | 1882 |
| C. G. Allan | 1882 |
| C. W. A. Trollope (Stage Manager) | 1882 |
| J. W. Westropp | 1884 |
| A. Bourchier | 1888 |
| E. H. Whitmore | 1888 |
| The Right Hon. Sir G. C. Malet, G.C.B. | 1892 |
| W. G. Elliot | 1893 |
| C. Nugent | 1893 |

LADIES.

Lady Monckton.
Miss Helmore.
Mrs. Pope.
Mrs. Copleston.
Miss G. Liddell.
Miss L. Blair Oliphant.

Mrs. C. Sim.
Mrs. F. Liddell.
Mrs. C. Drummond (*ex officio*,
President's wife).
Mrs. C. Crutchley.

IV

THE GREEK PLAY, OXFORD

By PHILIP CARR

AT those sedate repasts which usually follow the last performance of the Oxford University Dramatic Society—it is not known, by the way, whether these were instituted to celebrate the joy of the spectators that their labours were over, or to alleviate the depression of the performers at their return to ordinary life and approaching “schools”—successive Secretaries, doubtless inspired by the solemnity of the moment, have rarely failed to refer with a sort of conscious superiority to the dignified position which the Society holds in the dramatic world. Among other courtesies extended to the representatives who attend these functions from Cambridge, no little stress is laid on the fact that however successful the Amateur Dramatic Club may be in a lighter vein, there remains a classic reserve and a literary flavour about performances of the O.U.D.S. which cannot be attained out of Oxford. Certainly a Society which can look back since its foundation in 1885 to a record which consists of ten plays of Shakespeare and three examples of the Greek dramatists, has something of which it can be justly proud; and since even its most enthusiastic advocates would scarcely pretend that undergraduates alone would have preserved this rather rigorous course, the gratitude

of its members must always be due to the decision which made it obligatory. The late Master of Balliol, Mr. Jowett, who was Vice-Chancellor in 1885, made it one of the conditions of the foundation of the Club and the existence of amateur acting in Oxford, that only Shakespeare or Greek plays should be performed. Besides this decree, which really made the O.U.D.S., Mr. Jowett did other services to the drama in the University. It was through his instrumentality that Mr. (now Sir) Henry Irving came down to Oxford in 1886 and delivered a lecture in the Sheldonian Theatre on English actors, and it was under his immediate patronage that there was produced on June 3, 1880, five years before the foundation of the O.U.D.S., the first serious attempt which had been made in England to give a performance, in the language in which it was written, of a Greek play.

When it became known that in the new hall at Balliol, just completed, there was to be given a performance of the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus, under no less distinguished auspices than those of the Regius Professor of Greek and the Fellows of Balliol College, the interest of the University was thoroughly aroused. There were some, indeed, of the severer sort who were disposed to regard this as a sort of illegitimate back-door to making scholarship easy, or even interesting. It seemed to rob the classics of their exclusive interest, and to place the scholar in no little danger of being lost in the crowd. Among undergraduates, on the other hand, the proposed innovation was greeted with enthusiasm. Many, hardened though they were by schools, began to read Æschylus. In the punts on the Cherwell, hitherto sacred to the yellow-back novel, might be noticed copy after copy of the "Agamemnon"—sometimes in Greek. The excitement

spread even to North Oxford, and fluttered the dovescotes of the Woodstock and the Banbury roads, where the educated lady was in those days really a new woman, and this form of "education made pleasant" an excellent opportunity to make a trial of strength, and a first exhibition of newly-acquired culture.

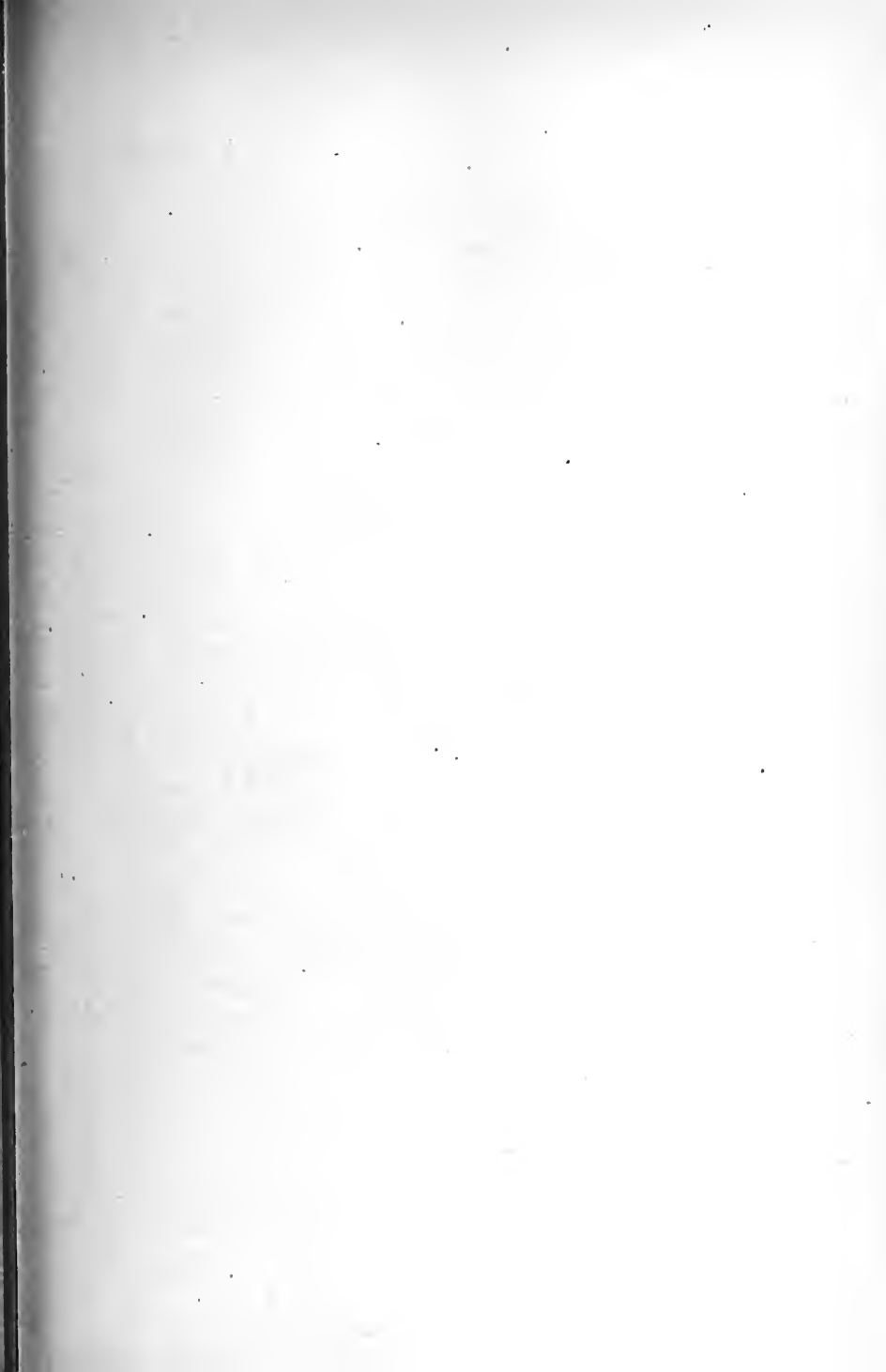
When the performance actually took place, the result was more successful than the actors or their friends had dared to anticipate. An audience composed of all Oxford and some of Cambridge discovered that not only could a Greek play be acted, not only were the characters human beings and not mere abstractions, but that this particular play possessed an engrossing dramatic interest. The mounting was of the very simplest; but although those who organised the performance disclaimed "any intention to produce a facsimile of a Greek drama, which, if it were possible, would seem to all but antiquaries grotesque and unmeaning," yet this first of the Greek play productions was probably more classical in feeling than any of its successors, with the possible exception of the open-air performances at Bradfield College. The scenery, for which a drawing had been made by the late Sir Edward Burne-Jones, was painted by Professor W. B. Richmond, who also designed the costumes. There was no curtain or wings or proscenium. The palace front of the Atreidae was the scene throughout the play, and occupied the upper stage; while on a stage below were placed the chorus round an altar of Dionysus. It was upon the chorus and the question of its management that discussion had chiefly centred before the production, and no doubt it was the greatest difficulty which the promoters had to face. What was to be done with these long passages of reflection on the story of the play and on life which are placed in its mouth, and which

might seem rather painfully lacking in dramatic effect to a modern audience, although they include some of the finest lines of Greek tragedy? In later productions the difficulty has been met by setting the longer passages to music, and assigning the shorter ones mainly to the Coryphæus. The Greek plays at Cambridge have always been produced in this way, and with a full orchestra. In the "Agamemnon," however, there was no orchestra, and with the exception of a few bars of austere music composed by Mr. Parratt, organist of Magdalen College, for the beginning of the opening chorus, and for a short strain before the death-cry of Agamemnon, there was no music. The lines of the chorus were either recited in monotone, for which the note was given by a pitch-pipe and a tuning-fork, or were distributed as dialogue amongst its members; and, in spite of a rather natural desire on the part of the audience for more music and less monotone, and some criticism on the liberty of changing chorus into dialogue, it was felt that the difficulty had been very successfully overcome. Indeed, it is probable that for the chorus of a tragedy this was the best method which could have been adopted. The breaking up of some parts among various speakers gave movement and dramatic action to those passages which dealt most closely with the story, while the delivery of the rest in monotone gained at least as much in dignity and impressiveness as it lost in variety through the absence of music. In the case of a comedy, in which variety is the chief aim, the problem presented by the chorus is a different one, to which music is a better, possibly the best, solution. Even here the question of how far modernity is justified by its introduction of variety proved, when the later production of the "Frogs" took place, one which provoked the most widely different opinions.

As regards the acting of the "Agamemnon," the chief parts were taken by Mr. F. R. Benson of New College, Mr. G. Lawrence of Corpus, Mr. Bruce of Balliol and Mr. W. L. Courtney of New College. Of these, the name of Mr. Benson has since become well known as that of a successful actor-manager, especially in connection with the Shakespearean revivals at Stratford-on-Avon. Upon the merits of the performers the critical opinion of Oxford was divided into two camps. There were the "Clytemnestrians," the admirers of Mr. Benson's impersonation of the queen, and the "Cassandrites," who found more virtue in the performance of Mr. Lawrence. Each had excellences—the fine presence, the dignity, the refinement of Mr. Benson, and the success with which he struck the true tragic note in his acting, compensated amply in the eyes of his partisans for the lack of variety in his voice ; while Mr. Lawrence, with a voice of peculiar beauty and flexibility, more than overcame, the Cassandrites urged, the disadvantages of a tendency to under-acting and want of movement. Of the others, Mr. Bruce as Agamemnon was good, but was hampered by the rather elementary nature of his "properties." His chariot, from whose eminence he had to declaim his most important speech, consisted merely of a wheel in the far corner of the stage ; and the purple robes, the walking across which was to bring down on him the awful Nemesis of the gods, were rather inadequately represented by a roll of red carpet, suggestive rather of the brougham and Berkeley Square than the chariot and the palace of the Atreidae. Mr. Courtney, who played the part of the watchman, began thereby a connection with the drama at Oxford which bore much fruit in the assistance which he gave in the foundation of the O.U.D.S.

After the "Agamemnon" Oxford did not produce another Greek play for several years. Mr. Courtney and others who had taken part in the memorable performance in Balliol Hall helped to produce the "Alcestis" at Bradfield College; and Cambridge followed the lead of Oxford with productions of the "Ajax" of Sophocles, the "Birds" of Aristophanes and the "Eumenides" of Æschylus. It was not, however, till 1887, in the third year of the O.U.D.S., that another effort was made in Greek drama at Oxford. By this time the conditions were vastly different. Not only was the O.U.D.S. founded, but the town had been at last provided with a theatre. It was here that, on May 18, the O.U.D.S. produced the "Alcestis" of Euripides. Mr. Courtney undertook the supervision of the production, while Mr. Alan Mackinnon, who has been responsible for so many Shakespearean productions of the Society, was stage manager. The principal parts were taken by Mr. A. H. E. Grahame (Admetus), Mr. Alan Mackinnon (Apollo), Mr. Arthur Bouchier (Death), Mr. A. E. W. Mason (Heracles), Mr. Coningsby Disraeli (servant) and Miss J. E. Harrison (Alcestis).

As the play took place in the theatre it was almost inevitable that some advance should be made in the direction of assimilating the conditions of the production to the conventions of the modern stage. The curtain was not discarded, as at Balliol; in fact a new one was used, painted specially for the occasion by Mr. Herkomer, then Slade Professor of Fine Art. The stage was still divided, the lower part being reserved to the chorus, who circled round the thymele in its centre, but the arrangements approximated more to modern than to ancient convention. It was not thought inappropriate, for instance, that Death





MR. BOURCHIER AS Θάvaros IN "THE ALCESTIS."

From a photograph by Messrs. Hills & Saunders, Oxford.

should enter up a trap-door, or that he should be provided with every melodramatic accessory.

As to the lines of the chorus, they were accompanied by music, written by Mr. Lloyd, organist of Christchurch ; and although it was throughout archaic in feeling, and made a successful attempt to reproduce the tones of the music of the Greeks—it is not known, by the way, who judged of the success of this—although, also, the orchestra was restricted to two harps, a flute, and a clarionet, yet it was a distinct change from the simplicity of the “Agamemnon.” But whatever were the disadvantages of these changes from the point of view of theories of a classical revival, there can be no question that from the point of view of the audience they were entirely justified by success. The music was throughout most impressive, the acting—especially, perhaps, that of Mr. Bouchier, Mr. Mason and Miss Harrison—was most effective, and the enterprise generally was allowed to be the most successful that the O.U.D.S. had yet attempted. Not that the production was without its unrehearsed incidents, amusing only unintentionally. Possibly the shade of Euripides was taking a mild revenge on those who would dare to present his masterpiece with the aid of modern theatrical device, for the two accidents which occurred were certainly connected with the most ambitious of the mechanical effects. Mr. Alan Mackinnon, equipped with the full paraphernalia of Apollo’s traditional costume—for which see Classical Dictionary, *passim*—was to be let down in a thoroughly supernatural manner by strings from the sky. As this descent was taking place his bow—without which no Apollo would be complete—managed to get caught up in the strings, and Mr. Mackinnon narrowly escaped a violent death by strangling. This is probably the only recorded

instance of the use of the bowstring in this country in the Turkish manner. Mr. Bouchier, on the other hand, most grimly made up, with gauze and dagger and whitened face, as Death, was to make his appearance at the other end, from below. For this entrance, that no attribute of terror should be lost, it was provided that clouds of steam should surround the spectral figure as he arose. This was to be arranged by a system of pipes of boiling water, certain valves of which were to be opened to produce the required nebulous effect. The stage hand, however, who had been placed in command of this murderous engine manipulated it with such adroitness that there issued not jets of steam, but of the hottest water, which nearly made Death belie his name by being boiled alive. After these two successful efforts the soul of the author was no doubt satisfied, for no more lives were endangered. That Mr. Bouchier should begin his first speech Ω τὸ γυβίλη in the year 1887, when all Oxford were ringing with Corney Grain's famous song, belonged more to that class of accident that is prompted by "malice prepense" in the performer. This is only one among many instances in the O.U.D.S. when the "original Greek," in which the play was performed, was even more original than that of the author.

In the year 1892, when the next Greek play was attempted, the O.U.D.S. struck out a line entirely new. Tragedy was exchanged for comedy, and the last shreds of convention was abandoned in the performance for the sake of modern stage effect. The play chosen was the "Frogs" of Aristophanes, and the satire on the Athens of Pericles was illustrated by modern instances in the way of "business" and "properties" bearing a reference, more "up-to-date" and more easily understood, to the Oxford of to-day. Dr. Hubert Parry, who had previously written

music to a performance of the "Birds" at Cambridge, revelled, in the complicated score which he composed for the "Frogs," in every form of topical allusion and *jeu d'esprit*. A full orchestra was engaged, and no attempt was made to recall in any way an atmosphere of old music. The "Boulanger March" was pressed into the service side by side with reminiscences from Grand Opera, and with well-known English airs, to enforce modern applications of the points in the play. The result was to make the general idea of the satire of Aristophanes far more comprehensible to the majority of the audience than it could otherwise have been; and whatever fault the scholar could find with the extravagance of the composer's method, he could certainly not deny its brilliance. There can be little doubt that it was to Dr. Parry's music that was due the great success which was achieved. In the staging and acting similar tactics were relied upon. It might have been thought that the fact of the committee of the Society being reinforced for this occasion by three senior members of the University—Mr. D. G. Hogarth of Magdalen, Mr. A. E. Haigh of Corpus, and Mr. R. W. Macan of University—would be some guarantee for the correctness of the production. This was true in a certain sense. An attempt being frankly made to give a realistic presentment of ancient Greek life by means of modern stage pictures, rather than to illustrate the comedy by following approximately the conventions under which it was written, the advice of these gentlemen was invaluable in the question of the accuracy of scenery, properties, and costumes; but with regard to any idea of giving an impression of the Greek theatre, upon which one of them was a leading authority, their assistance was not needed, as no endeavour of this sort was made. The double stage was abandoned,

as was also the altar of Dionysus, and the chorus was disposed about the stage much as in a comic opera. The scenery, which was elaborate, and included many changes, was picturesque rather than conventional, and the acting aimed chiefly, with the music, at fitting modern application to ancient satire. The effect of all this upon the audience was tremendous. The theatre was packed at every performance, and the enthusiasm, when Charon instructed Dionysus to row across the Styx with all the manner of the coach and the freshman out "tubbing," was uproariously sympathetic. The O.U.D.S. was above playing burlesques as they did at Cambridge—at least it was not allowed—but the audience felt that they could manage to get quite near enough to it in Aristophanes to make a very entertaining evening. So the University flocked to the theatre, and the receipts for the "Frogs" exceeded those of any performance by the Society, either before or since. The acting was excellent almost throughout. The chief parts were taken by Mr. L. H. Helbert of Oriel (Dionysus), Mr. H. F. Lyon of Trinity (Xanthias), Mr. M. B. Furse of Trinity (Heracles), Mr. J. E. Talbot of Magdalen (Æschylus) and Mr. A. A. Ponsonby of Balliol, who doubled the parts of the Corpse and Euripides. Perhaps Mr. Ponsonby made the most notable success, though where all were good it is difficult to distinguish. Mr. Furse combined with acting the part of Heracles the arduous duties of stage manager, and triumphed in both; while Mr. Helbert added to his laurels as Dionysus the distinction of making the most amusing "gag" of the last performance—always an occasion with the O.U.D.S. for speeches (long and short remarks), witty and dull; and bouquets (humorous and sentimental). An admirer on this occasion had thrown to Dionysus, a bunch, which

was obviously intended as a token of admiration for the donkey which stood patiently at his side. Dionysus picked it up, and bowing gracefully—history does not relate whether he was inspired or had previously paid for the vegetables—said simply *Χάριτες*. This brilliant repartee put a suitable ending to the most successful production of the O.U.D.S. It was a week gratefully remembered by many; but by none was it so treasured as by the barbers of Oxford. For the design of the Greek costume, and the determination of the committee to discard the use of what, it is said, are technically known as “fleshings,” had resulted in placing some of these gentlemen in a position of affluence almost sufficient to retire from business.

The O.U.D.S. made no other attack on the Greek classics till 1897, when Aristophanes was again taken as the victim, and a performance was given of the “Knights.” On this occasion the same methods were adopted as in the case of the “Frogs.” The music, composed by the Rev. F. W. Russell of B.N.C., was again elaborate and again topical, and in this, as in both the acting and stage management, the object aimed at was to illustrate by allusion to local and contemporary points the satire on the politics of 2000 years ago. The management of the chorus was even more than in the “Frogs” that of comic opera, or rather of burlesque. So far from circling round a Dionysiac altar, they made their first entrance from all sides of the stage, and on hobby-horses, and their evolutions throughout were conducted with a view to ludicrous effect. The acting was treated in the same spirit. The two chief parts, those of Cleon and the Sausage-seller, were played by Mr. P. A. Rubens of University and Mr. H. M. Woodward of Keble. Both were excellent in different ways, Mr. Woodward shining more particularly

as a comedian, and Mr. Rubens in passages which required rather the treatment of burlesque. The other parts were taken by Mr. L. R. F. Oldershaw of Christchurch (Demus), Mr. A. N. Tayler of University (Nicias) and Mr. F. Stevens of Keble (Demosthenes), while Viscount Suirdale (New College) was the Coryphæus.

The production of the "Knights" completes the list of the Greek play revivals at Oxford. Extending, as this list does, from the severe simplicity of the "Agamemnon," the first Greek play in England, to the frankly modernised stage management of the "Frogs" and the "Knights," it suggests the much-debated question of the spirit in which the revival of Greek plays at the Universities should be undertaken. When, after the "Agamemnon," the step was made towards elaboration in the stage setting of the "Alcestis," there were some who thought that the chief virtue of these representations was being lost. When the producers of the "Frogs" entirely discarded convention to give the most elaborate effect to the play, opinions were even more divided. It was argued that this method of presentation abandoned the whole *raison d'être* of putting these works upon the stage ; that it might be amusing, but it certainly was not classical ; and that it was merely a veiled way of producing a modern burlesque under the cloak of the Greek author. For this last argument there was certainly some ground. No opportunity was missed in which a topical interpretation could be given to the Greek lines of Aristophanes, both in the acting, the stage management and the music ; and these passages were naturally the most successful with the audience. It is a doubtful question, on the other hand, whether, if they were not done in this way, the comedies could be produced by the O.U.D.S. at all. The allusions, almost all

to contemporary affairs, are very dead to a mainly ignorant audience 2000 years after the event, if they are not helped out with some modern application, and it is chiefly upon these allusions that the plays are based. The tragedies, which deal with emotions which are eternal, are in a different case, as the performance of the "Agamemnon" showed. With the comedies, the alternative is to play them with modern adaptations of the satire and to crowded houses, or, in what is obviously the better, and in the end the only reasonable, way, to an audience which understands the real allusion, but which is necessarily very limited. It is here that a society like the O.U.D.S. is in rather a difficult position. It is expected to perform a Greek play from time to time, and apart from the rather natural disinclination of its members to act to empty benches, and the also rather natural inclination of some of them to indulge in the nearest thing they can to burlesque, there remains the fact that the Society cannot afford to produce a play in a way which is not likely to cover expenses—and these are not light. The only thoroughly satisfactory way to present these plays is, if not with the open-air theatre of Bradfield, at least with absolute simplicity, as was the production at Balliol. But if the O.U.D.S. adopted this plan it would probably find itself with very small takings to meet the expenses. Besides, the necessary incursion into antiquarianism is not peculiarly attractive to most of the members of a club like this, whose desire is primarily to do some acting. The decree of Dr. Jowett, which confined the Society to Shakespeare, few of its members would regret, but there are certainly some who would deplore the additional obligation to periodically produce a Greek play. The senior members of the University are

probably more interested in the latter part of the pursuits of the Society than in the former; and as the senior members of the University are obviously more qualified to supervise the management of the Greek plays in a scholarly way, and are more in touch with the audiences which the Greek plays attract, it would seem more fitting that the production of them should be in their own hands. This is the position at Cambridge, and might advisedly be imitated at Oxford. Whether a College Hall is more adapted to the necessary simplicity of the production or not—and those who remember the “Agamemnon” would be inclined to say that it is—there can be no question that if they were placed entirely in the hands of graduates these revivals would gain much in correctness and appropriateness of rendering. The elaboration of music and scenery, and the modernising of the plays to make them attractive to the multitude, have tended to spoil these performances; but this was the only way in which the O.U.D.S., unaided, could attempt to undertake them. Let them return, under other auspices, to a simpler form of presentation, and leave the O.U.D.S. to the more congenial task of acting the plays of Shakespeare.

V

THE A.D.C., CAMBRIDGE

1861-1898

BY THE EDITOR

MY best thanks are due to the under-mentioned gentlemen for the kind assistance they have afforded me in the preparation of the following record:—Mr. J. W. Clark, Mr. Albert Bankes, the Right Hon. J. W. Lowther, M.P., Mr. H. A. Newton, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, M.P., Mr. W. H. Leese, and Mr. R. Balfour.

W. G. ELLIOT.

July 1898.

In attempting to write any history of the Cambridge Amateur Dramatic Club, there are two names that must ever be pre-eminent—those of the founder, Mr. F. C. Burnand, and the best friend, Mr. J. W. Clark. Had it not been for the exertions of these two gentlemen, one who, in the face of great difficulties, knit together the stones of this historic assembly, and the other, who, ever watchful, kept them from falling apart, it is more than possible that by this time the Club would have ceased to exist. Those who have been so fortunate as to read Mr. Burnand's entertaining book, "Personal Reminiscences of the A.D.C.," will doubtless remember the obstacles which beset its formation: how it first began in a quiet sort of way in rooms, then

migrated to the Hoop Hotel, and finally entered on its present comfortable quarters at the corner of Jesus Lane. Unfortunately the scope of the present chapter does not admit of any detailed reference to the years 1855-63, the period covered by Mr. Burnand's book, which also contains a full account of the plays acted within that period. For the same reason it is impossible to mention the numerous performances which have taken place, and the numerous performers who have acted between 1863 and the present date. The plan followed, therefore, will be as follows: The full casts will be given of those plays which have been deemed to be of special merit, and as many of the others as possible will be alluded to.

As regards the earlier period then, suffice it to say that the psychological moment having arrived, Mr. Burnand—thus showing that he had made a careful study, not only of the actor's art, but also of the perruquier's—determined to beard the Vice-Chancellor in his den. It was necessary to obtain this gentleman's permission to give a performance in the big room of the Bull Hotel, where money might be taken; the plays to be acted being "Villikins and his Dinah" and "Box and Cox." The account of the interview between the two is one of the most delightful things in the "Reminiscences." Would there were space to quote from it! The result thereof was ultimately unsatisfactory, the Vice-Chancellor refusing his permission; but Mr. Burnand was not to be outdone. Very soon an opportunity offered itself. The Athenæum Club got up a performance, which was practically winked at by the authorities, and the opportunity was seized. If they wink at one club, they must wink at another; and so came the securing of a room at the Hoop Hotel, and the foundation of the A.D.C. The first performance took place in the May term of 1855, and from

that time to this there has never been break or intermission. No doubt this continuity has been to a very large extent secured by the good offices of Mr. J. W. Clark, to whose great services allusion will be made later on. Fortunately, too—owing to his exertions, aided by those of the late indefatigable President, Mr. R. Balfour—a complete record of the Club's performances from 1855 to 1897 is now in the possession of the A.D.C., with all the playbills complete.

A retrospect shows that there have, to all intents and purposes, been three periods. They may be classified as follows :—

1855-66. Burlesque and Farce.

1866-88. Comedy and Drama.

1888-98. Modern Burlesque.

Now it is interesting to note that these two latter periods appear to coincide with the general dramatic taste of the day. It was just about 1888 that the public began to evince a marked aptitude for the lighter forms of entertainment: Whereas they had hitherto patronised the drama proper very steadily, the bulk of them then began to turn their attention to—not exactly the drama improper—but to those theatres where what is known as “the sacred lamp of burlesque” and musical comedy, a later development of the music-hall, held sway. The aforesaid “sacred lamp” had always burnt pretty brightly, it now began to assume the brilliancy of a large electric cluster. It is pretty evident that Cambridge at once felt the effect of the new wave of public taste, and responded thereto.

They had a good deal to struggle against in 1888. Five years' competition with the Cambridge Theatre, an institution unknown in the earlier days, and, it must be owned, an exceedingly slack period between 1883 and 1888, when the acting, from all accounts, was not up to

the usual standard, tended to lower the Club in popular estimation. Moreover, since 1882 they had the onus of a heavy debt, which it was absolutely necessary to incur—more of this later—and the funds, too, were at a very low ebb. Burlesque, however, saved them. It was good policy to revert to the ideas of Mr. Burnand's time, but it was better policy still to dress them up in a new form. Those who were in authority at the time were clever enough to see this, and they did it. What was the result? Burlesque in the May term has paid ever since.

In 1861-62, when Mr. Albert Bankes was President, there were a number of young men in residence who have since distinguished themselves in different ways. The present Earl Carrington was the leading lady, and Messrs. Burnand and Quintin Twiss—the latter celebrated amateur coming from Oxford, but still an honorary member of the A.D.C.—used to come down and act occasionally, although B.A.'s and absentees. Lord Henniker, now Governor of the Isle of Man, the late Mr. Arthur Guest, a Director of the London & South-Western Railway, and Mr. Edward Ross, the champion rifle shot, were, with Mr. Bankes, representatives of "the supers" of that period. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales was also in *statu pupillari*, and belonged to the Club. He often came to see the performances, and showed not so very long ago that his interest in the A.D.C. still exists by kindly assenting to take the chair at the dinner held to commemorate the 25th anniversary of its foundation. Of this more in its proper place.

During Mr. Bankes' term of Presidency a remarkable scene happened one evening. The thunder—a thin piece of sheet-iron, six feet by two, decided, for no particular reason, to fall from its nail on to the bridge of Lord Pollington's nose. He was at the moment waiting for his cue at the side, and the farce had just begun. Fleet-

footed supers rushed hither and thither for cotton-wool and plaster, and the noble Viscount pluckily announced his intention of proceeding with his part. Unfortunately the blood could not be stanchèd, so the curtain had to come down. Mr. Albert Bankes, advancing to the front, said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the thunder having fallen on Lord Pollington's nose, the piece just commenced must be withdrawn; but to prevent disappointment, within five minutes another farce shall be played by members of the Club."

In 1864 the College Tutors made their first appearance at the A.D.C.—it certainly was by no means their last—and wanted to stop the acting altogether. "Waste of time" was the reason given. However, several graduates wrote a beautiful letter to the authorities, wherein they urged the plea "that the A.D.C., and the A.D.C. alone, had taught them the secret of producing, in after life, that impassioned flow of eloquence and invective that had already made its mark, not only in the Lower Chamber, but had likewise stirred hoary-headed and somnolent Peers to fresh efforts in the, at times, more lethargic Upper House. Parish meetings—ay, even Local Authorities, Quarter-Sessions, and rugged Scottish Commissioners of Supply were listening with fascination to the younger generation, who were thus knocking at the door. This wonderful result had been obtained from acting at the A.D.C. Could the Tutors be so hard-hearted? Could they be so blind to the vital fact that any society that could get all this out of its members should be encouraged—not put down?" Needless to say, the Tutors gave way to a man. The appeal got about into donnish circles. Strong and bearded Senior Classics were seen to turn pale; Junior Bursars forgot to count their money-bags; sallow, emaciated Wranglers writhed uneasily in their not-often-to-be-changed

flannel shirts ; even the Heads of Colleges were visibly moved, and the Club proceeded on its way.

Proceeding with the narrative of events from 1864, when Mr. Burnand made his last appearance either in the "Critic" or in "Robert Macaire," a strong cast is to be found acting in 1865—Messrs. P. Finch, F. Ramsbotham, N. A. Hunt, F. Maclean, Q.C.—now holding a high judicial post in India—and the present Sir Charles Hall, Q.C.

The next year, 1866, marks an era in A.D.C. history. After much cogitation the Committee decided to break away from the traditions of the past, and present for the first time a three-act comedy, Tom Taylor's "Overland Route." A great deal of doubt was expressed as to the wisdom of the step, but it was fully justified by its success. Much care was taken over the production. The late Mr. David Powell, lately Governor of the Bank of England, who was up at the time, was a tower of strength in the way of scene-painting and stage-management, making a special study of the scenes required. The cabin of the Peninsular & Oriental steamship *Simoom* was voted a great success ; but it was entirely eclipsed by Act II., the Deck of the *Simoom*, and Act III., a Coral Reef. These were the most elaborate "sets" the Club had yet undertaken, and all sorts of touches were added to give reality, *e.g.* the small swing-lamps in the cabin, which Mr. Powell procured, and which were made exactly after the P. & O. model.

Now, any one who has had much to do with plays knows that the "Overland Route" is an extremely difficult piece to produce. The cast is a big one, each part requires good acting, and there is a tremendous amount of what is technically known as "business," especially at the end of the second act, when the ship strikes on a reef, and a panic ensues among the passengers. There is a

crowd of supers, consisting of Lascars, stewards, officers, and travellers of all types, whose dresses want careful thinking out and arranging properly. That this difficult task was carried through successfully shows what a number of very strong men must have been members at the time. Contemporary records all go to show that this performance—the first—of the “Overland Route” was one of the big successes of the A.D.C. No doubt the most remarkable bit of acting in the play was Mr. Cyril Flower, now Lord Battersea, as Mrs. Sebright, the gay, flirtatious grass-widow. The cast was a fine one all round, but this assumption stood out pre-eminently, and Mr. Flower’s photograph, now hanging in the Club rooms, shows how wonderful he must have looked. The effect made by this play was so great, that it practically gave the keynote to the style of piece acted for more than twenty years afterwards. It inaugurated the second period above referred to. Cast :—

“THE OVERLAND ROUTE.”

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mr. Colepepper | Mr. W. A. BANKES. |
| Sir Solomon Fraser | Mr. F. RAMSBOTHAM. |
| Major M'Turk | Mr. E. F. PELLEW. |
| Tom Dexter | Mr. C. HALL. |
| Mr. Lovibond | Mr. P. FINCH. |
| Captain Clavering | Mr. A. K. FINLAY. |
| Captain Smart | Mr. C. E. SWAINSON. |
| Hardisty | Mr. H. A. G. MORRALL. |
| Tottle | Mr. H. POWELL. |
| Moleskin | Mr. N. A. HUNT. |
| Limpet | MARQUIS OF HUNTLY. |
| Jack Sebright | Mr. H. J. ROUPELL. |
| Smiths and Jackson | Messrs COLVIN and LONG. |
| Mrs. Lovibond | Mr. E. S. SWAINSON. |
| Mrs. Sebright | Mr. C. FLOWER. |
| Miss Colepepper | Lord ELLESMERE. |
| Grimwood | Mr. C. GAUSSEN. |
| Mrs. Rabbits | Lord RONALD LEVESON-GOWER. |

The great success of 1866 evidently urged Mr. Flower and his associates to greater deeds, for they attempted in 1867, most unwisely as it turned out, to give a representation of nothing short of "Ruy Blas" in blank verse. According to the record, "the scenery and 'appointments'—whatever they may be—were excellent, but the play turned out to be much too hard for amateurs to perform." The whole thing was evidently rather a dismal failure, but the play was in part saved by an unrehearsed effect which came off in the last act. In the middle of a dark scene, just as Ruy Blas had stabbed Don Salluste, and as the lifeless body went plop over the parapet, the figure of the Club page-boy was seen to steal slowly across the stage, bearing a brandy and soda on a tray to an individual who was waiting for his cue on the opposite side, and who was evidently nervous. Perhaps this was one of the "appointments" above referred to.

The next event of importance was the production, in 1868, of the "Contested Election." It was here that Mr. Herbert Gardner, now Lord Burghclere, made his first appearance, indeed a most excellent *jeune premier*, and one of the A.D.C.'s. very best actors. Mr. Reginald Kelly too scored another of his big successes. The Church and St. Paul's Cathedral have now claimed him for their own. Mr. Gardner seems to have been the best lover the Club ever possessed, for in "Plot and Passion," acted about this time, a long love speech spoken by Henri de Neuville, which had been cut out at rehearsal as presenting too many difficulties, was reinserted after the first performance, and rendered by him with admirable effect.

In 1869 the "School for Scandal" was played, wherein Mr. Gardner, as Charles Surface, and others won great triumphs. Mr. Walter Durnford, too, now one of our

most popular Eton masters, scored heavily in the part of Lady Teazle.

In 1870 they tried rather a curious experiment. A piece was wanted with no female interest therein. Now every one knows that this is a dangerous venture on the stage as well as in real life, dangerous because boredom so often ensues. The individual known through the medium of the novel and play as the "crabbed old bachelor" will probably respond—that is, if he talks in old-fashioned stage language—"Stuff, sir; stuff and nonsense! I don't want a parcel of silly, chattering women, with their ribbons and laces, bothering me! No, sir, neither when I go to see a play or at home!" At this juncture in the play or novel a bright creature with golden hair depending down her spinal column invariably creeps into the room and whispers, "Oh, Mr. Hatemall, I've brought you mother's miniature. Did you not know her when she was a girl?" Then the C.O.B. always breaks down and sobs, because he was attracted towards her when she was seventeen.

But, bachelor or no bachelor, it was necessary to find a play without any ladies therein. It appeared impossible. But, ha! *Ecce*, behold! *En*, lo! That guardian angel of the A.D.C., Mr. J. W. Clark, clad not in dazzling raiment and wings, but in an ordinary suit of clothes, suddenly descended on the committee room firmly grasping a long pole in his hand, and in a far-away voice volunteered to rewrite the "Courier de Lyons," leaving out the female interest, which is slight. The idea was received with a hoarse shout of approval from eight wearied throats, and it was done. The play was rearranged; Joliquet, Jerome Lesurques' servant, made one of the principal parts, so as to give Mr. Gardner a good chance, and the whole was voted a great success. It is not generally known that besides writing

this capital version, Mr. Clark also invented the English title by which the play has been known ever since, viz., "The Lyons Mail."

1870 saw another rising of the Tutors against the Club. Looking back on A.D.C. history, an investment in Tutors would have been a capital thing—they seemed to be so constantly rising—not unlike, too, the Picts and Scots of a slightly earlier period. They were only quelled after a scene of awful carnage, wherein the A.D.C. lost nearly the whole headquarter staff, and had also to accept ten additional rules. The feeling appears to have been so strong at this period that the curtain had to be dropped at eleven sharp one night, although the play was not over! Exeunt the Tutors "for a little, just a little," as a somewhat ancient comic song hath it.

In 1872 a farce was to be played one night, in which Mr. Hunt, one of the great guns, was to take part. The house was crowded, the time came, but no signs of Hunt. The manager, who was evidently an awfully funny and amusing man, walked on to the stage and remarked that Mr. Hunt was not in the house, but that they would "hunt" for him elsewhere. Shouts of laughter. The firing off of this witticism, which was very properly so splendidly received, evidently seemed to clear the manager's brain, for he suddenly became possessed of a brilliant idea. Spying out Mr. Reginald Kelly sitting among the audience, he requested him to ascend on to the stage and give one of his well-known piano sketches *à la* John Parry. Mr. Kelly very kindly obliged, and his sketch was such a success that it had to be repeated every night. When it was over, the "hunt" ha! ha! having been successful, the farce was proceeded with.

1873, besides witnessing a revival of the "Overland

Route," was noticeable for the production of Sullivan and Burnand's charming operetta, "Cox and Box." It was acted by Messrs. George Murray, Jekyll, and G. H. Longman, the celebrated cricketer.

1874 saw the "Heir at Law," with Mr. A. T. Olive as Dr. Pangloss.

1875 was the beginning of a very strong time, which culminated in 1882. "London Assurance" was given. The Hon. A. Bourke played Dazzle, and Mr. J. W., now the Right Hon. J. W., Lowther, Chairman of Committees in the House of Commons, and Mr. F. Cavendish-Bentinck, two of the Club's best actors, first appeared before a Cambridge audience. During the rehearsals, Mr. Bourke, being lame, had to do his rehearsal in an arm-chair. Dazzle in an arm-chair! The Hon. Stephen Coleridge, who acted Sir Harcourt Courtly according to contemporary records, "ought to have looked like an old man made up young, instead of which he looked like a young man made up old." Where were Clarkson and assistants? Mr. Percy Crutchley, who was the "Cool" of the occasion, is reported to have opened the play thus—"Eight o'clock, and Mr. Charles not yet returned." This he did most admirably, but always bent down towards the footlights in order to see by their light what the time was by his watch.

In February 1876 they acted for the first time after the usual anniversary dinner. The performances had hitherto been restricted to three nights per week, but this was the beginning of somewhat more liberty. Bravo, the Tutors! The piece chosen was the "Thumping Legacy," the only comic incident being the contrast in size of the two Carbineers. Mr., now Dr., Alan Gray, Mus. Doc., who presides over the organ in Trinity Chapel, was by far the

tallest man in the university. His colleague was a little boy, the son of the late Mr. Townley, Lord-Lieutenant of the County. This young man was suddenly impressed into the service of the Carbineers at the last moment, they being evidently one short. He was so terrified when his co-Carbineer suddenly stalked on to the stage that he was seized with a fit of the wriggles, which eventually deprived him of his trousers, and gave a somewhat "Hieland" smack to the whole affair.

In 1875 "She Stoops to Conquer" was mounted. Much care was exercised in its production. Mr. Coe coached, and Mr. J. O'Connor, the scene-painter at the Haymarket, came down to paint the chief scene, "A Room at Hardcastle's." It took the whole of the A.D.C. stage, and was very pretty. All the furniture and properties—no "appointments" this time—were carefully thought out, and anachronism religiously eschewed. It was most excellently acted all round, Mr. Howard Sturgis as Miss Hardcastle in a Gainsborough hat being wonderful, both in appearance and performance.

This year the theatre was redecorated by private subscription. On the second night Mr. J. W. Clark pulled up the curtain too soon, and Miss Hardcastle and Miss Neville—acted by Sir George Douglas—were discovered among the "Shabby fellows" in the Inn. Cheers and laughter.

In November 1877 they acted "Money," and five nights' performance were allowed. One of the A.D.C.'s most celebrated actors here made his bow, viz., Mr. Charles Brookfield. Those who have seen his admirable work on the stage will be interested to know that this was his first—as it were—regular appearance. "Money" was another very decided success, and was very well cast.

Mr. Lowther played Evelyn ; Mr. Frank Foster, Sir Frederick ; Mr. C. Newton, Clara Douglas ; and Mr. Brookfield, Sir John Vesey ; and also Messiter in a "Nice Firm," the farce preceding the comedy, wherein Mr. G. Milner-Gibson, now Mr. Cullum, made a great hit as Miss Applejohn. He was a very excellent comedian, especially in middle-aged ladies' parts. An amusing incident happened in the first act of "Money" ; Mr., now the Rev., A. W. Pulteney was acting Lady Franklin, and acting it very well. Shortly before the end of the act off came his blonde wig. It was hopeless to try and put it on again, so he kept it in his lap ; but his well-known features and short hair suddenly appearing on the top of his smart gown convulsed the audience.

One night too, during the progress of the "Nice Firm," Mr. Lowther gave Mr. Brookfield a little surprise. The latter's first lines were spoken to a supposed cabman outside, with whom he was disputing over the fare. Without informing Mr. Brookfield of his intention, Mr. Lowther got himself up as a cabman, carefully concealed himself until the latter had gone in, and then burst in with a demand for a larger fare. The audience caught the humour of the situation, and appreciated the joke hugely.

Now comes, perhaps, the finest performance ever given at the A.D.C., viz., the "Ticket-of-Leave Man," by Tom Taylor, in 1878. A very great deal of trouble was taken. The chief parts were cast in the May term before, and Mr. Horace Wigan, who created the part of "Hawkshaw the Detective," coached. It is indeed difficult to single out any one person for special commendation in the very fine cast, but Mr. Brookfield made a tremendous hit by his presentation of "Jem Dalton *alias* the Tiger," the forger, his assumptions of character in the different disguises this

individual assumes being nothing short of wonderful. Those too who witnessed Mr. J. W. Lowther's performance of Bob Brierly will never forget it. The manliness, strength, and pathos of the character were brought out by him in remarkable style, and his technique was perfect. Lord Binning as Sam Willoughby, the boy, was splendid, and Mr. Cullum as his mother was equally so. Special mention should also be made of the Melter Moss of the Hon., now, "and Rev." A. G. Lawley, and the Hawkshaw of the Hon. R. Milnes, now Lord Crewe—all the others too were first-rate. In fact, for good acting, perfect rehearsal, finish, and good scenery, painted by the deft hand of Mr. C. Newton, the comely Clara Douglas of "Money," this A.D.C. production will be hard to beat. Cast:—

"THE TICKET-OF-LEAVE MAN."

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bob Brierly | Mr. J. W. LOWTHER. |
| Jem Dalton | Mr. C. H. BROOKFIELD. |
| Melter Moss | Hon. A. G. LAWLEY. |
| Hawkshaw | Hon. R. O. A. MILNES. |
| Mr. Gibson | Mr. J. A. WATSON-TAYLOR. |
| Sam Willoughby | Lord BINNING. |
| Maltby | Mr. S. CHISENHALE-MARSH. |
| Waiter | Mr. CLAUDE PONSONBY. |
| 1st and 2nd Detectives | Hon. W. SUGDEN and Mr. R. L. PIKE. |
| Guest and Navvies | { Messrs. W. A. WIGRAM, J. A. ORR- EWING, P. S. HODGSON, W. G. ELLIOT, C. HODGSON, H. T. HALL. |
| May Edwards | Mr. J. BOLTON. |
| Mrs. Willoughby | Mr. G. MILNER-GIBSON-CULLUM. |

This performance ended Mr. J. W. Lowther's active connection with the Club, although he has always been one of those who have maintained a warm interest therein in after life. His term of office was a very remarkable

one. As earlier mentioned, the period 1875-82 inclusive represented one of the strongest periods of A.D.C. history, and he had all to do with the management in the first part thereof. An excellent stage-manager, an excellent actor, and an excellent fellow and good friend to all who knew him, his place at Cambridge will not be easily filled.¹

1879 was chiefly remarkable for a good performance by Hon. R. Milnes of Mr. Affable Hawk, in the "Game of Speculation," George Henry Lewis's adaptation of "Mercadet," in which Mr. Claude Ponsonby, Mr. S. Chisenhale-Marsh, Hon. "Joe" Lawley—brother of Hon. A. G. Lawley—also distinguished themselves greatly. A fine bit of acting too was Mr. E. D. Beylard's Dufard in the "First Night," which followed.

Lent term, 1880. The following circular speaks for itself:—"The Lent term, 1880, is the 25th Anniversary of the foundation of the A.D.C. It is proposed to celebrate the occasion by a dinner, at which H.R.H. the Prince of Wales has consented to preside, and it is hoped that all old members will be present. The dinner will take place in the Guildhall, Cambridge, on February 26th, and will be followed by a performance by members of the Club in the A.D.C. Theatre. Applications for tickets, price £1, 1s., should be made not later than February 20th to the Secretary, Trinity College." The toast list ran thus:—

¹ The individual who so kindly supplies notes for the next three years was closely connected with affairs from this time forth till the end of 1881, sometimes only acting, but for the greater part in the responsible and stern position of stage-manager, combined later with the more genial one of President. It would be as well, therefore, for readers of this history to take any remarks he makes as to the superexcellence of the acting, management, and presidential urbanity of this period with the usual grain of salt.—ED.

| <i>Proposer.</i> | <i>Toast.</i> | <i>To Respond.</i> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES | "The Queen." | |
| PRESIDENT OF THE A.D.C. | "The Prince and Princess of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family." | |
| H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES | "Prosperity to the A.D.C." | SECRETARY A.D.C. |
| SECRETARY A.D.C. | "Old Members." | MR. F. C. BURNAND. |

COMMITTEE.

President, Hon. IVO BLIGH ; *Hon. Secretary and Treasurer*, Mr. T. K. TAPLING ; *Stage-Manager*, Mr. W. G. ELLIOT ; and Messrs. E. D. BEYLARD, CLAUDE A. C. PONSONBY, H. WHITFIELD, and Hon. R. LEIGH.

The design of the theatre-programme consisted of an undergraduate and a girl holding a ring with the A. D. C. motto within, and the words "Silver wedding: Founder, F. C. Burnand." Cast :—

"TICKLISH TIMES."

A Farce by J. MADDISON MORTON.

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sir William Ramsay | Mr. G. STREATFEILD. |
| Mr. Bodkins | Mr. W. G. ELLIOT. |
| Lancelot Griggs | Mr. S. CHISENHALE-MARSH. |
| Jansen | Mr. T. B. MILLER. |
| Constables | Messrs. H. CALVERT and R. PIKE. |
| Mrs. Griggs | Hon. R. LEIGH. |
| Winifred | Mr. E. P. TENNANT. |
| Dot | Hon. R. WHITE. |

"THE FIRST NIGHT."

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Hon. Bertie Fitzdangle | Mr. CLAUDE A. C. PONSONBY. |
| Hyacinth Parnassus | Mr. S. CHISENHALE-MARSH. |
| Mr. Vamp | Mr. J. M. PAULTON. |
| Mr. Flat | Mr. W. G. ELLIOT. |
| Achille Talma Dufard | Mr. E. D. BEYLARD. |
| Emilie Antoinette Rose | Hon. R. LEIGH. |
| Miss Arabella Fitzjames | Mr. G. M.-G.-CULLUM. |
| Call Boy | Mr. W. E. P. BURGESS. |
| Actors, &c. | Messrs. MILLER, F. MILDMAY, TENNANT, MANNERS. |

The whole passed off very well indeed. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales presided in his usual admirable way, and made some excellent speeches. The same may be said of those delivered by Mr. Burnand, Mr. Tapling, and Hon. Ivo Bligh. Afterwards, to the theatre, where smoking and acting were indulged in to a late hour. The Prince expressed himself well pleased, especially with Messrs. Beylard and T. B. Miller, now a celebrated M.F.H., who scored largely as Jansen, the mysterious smuggler. History relates that Mr. Miller was brought up to be introduced to H.R.H., who was preparing to utter some complimentary words, but was entirely forestalled by Mr. Miller's immediate remark, "Hope your Royal Highness enjoyed the performance? I saw you laughing!" After this there was naturally no more to be said.

Mr. Miller was not only a capital actor, but possessed a rich vein of natural humour in private life. On one occasion, wonderfully made up and arrayed in the similitude of a German Baron that eateth sausages, he patrolled Trinity Old Court in the daytime, on the arm of the stern stage manager above alluded to, costumed as his nephew, who pointed out to his uncle the various objects of interest, such as the Chapel, Hall, Master's Lodge, residence of the two Deans, &c., in all of which the Baron took the liveliest interest. The porters at the gate were vastly amused.

The constitution of the A.D.C. Committee, which consisted of eight undergraduate members, had up to this time (1880) been conducted on the principle that the whole internal business, writing, and financial work, including the collecting and presentation of accounts, fell upon the shoulders of one person, who was at once secretary and treasurer for the time being. This was an excessively bad practice, and the disadvantage obvious.

It was impossible for a post of this nature, which carried with it all the Club obligations, to be properly administered when the individual in charge was constantly changing. The result was that accounts were left unpaid; the work done by one man had suddenly to be taken up by another, who might or might not have any particular aptitude for the post; and at last came the end—hopeless confusion and embarrassment. There is no doubt that many of the earlier A.D.C. troubles arose from this pernicious system; *i.e.* one person having to act both as treasurer and secretary, instead of splitting the posts and making the former a permanent one. Matters reached a climax in the October term 1880. It was then found that the twenty-fifth anniversary dinner, the cost of which had been estimated at £1, 1s. per head, practically cost £2, 2s.! What with other debts, the total liabilities were £420!! Of course a general meeting was called to discuss the situation. The subjoined extracts from the Minutes give the evolution thereof:—

“The treasurer read out a list of debts, amounting to £420. He calculated that subscriptions would bring in about £200. This left £220 to be provided. He appealed to the generosity of members who dined at the anniversary dinner to pay £1 as the subscription for this term.”

“The Hon. John Wallop proposed that the price of performance tickets be raised; but this was felt to be too great a speculation. The treasurer’s motion was ultimately carried by two votes.”

“Mr. Wallop then proposed, and Mr. Chisenhale-Marsh seconded, that the office of treasurer and secretary should be no longer held by one member of the Committee, but a permanent treasurer should be appointed, whose constant experience in the office would prevent such heavy

debts being incurred. After a vain attempt to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Wallop's motion was put and carried by *one* vote. It was decided to offer the post to Mr. J. W. Clark, M.A., and in case of a refusal, to summon another general meeting. Mr. Clark accepted the post."

This was indeed a stormy meeting. The Committee, who opposed Mr. Wallop's excellent motion, were beaten, but did *not* resign. Subsequent events showed that, although they were quite wrong in opposing Mr. Wallop, they were right in still clinging to office. The appointment of Mr. J. W. Clark to the post of permanent treasurer was one of the best moves the Club ever made, and Mr. Wallop and Mr. Marsh may be heartily thanked by posterity. Mr. Clark, better known as "J," has shown himself to be the best friend the A.D.C. ever had, and his business mind and experience have been invaluable at all their councils. That admirable reciter, Mr. Henry A. Newton, the stage-manager of 1882, never made a happier remark than when he said, some years later, "At the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary the principal feature shall be the entrance of 'J' into the Club-room in a car decked with flowers, and drawn by eight cream-coloured stage-managers."

In 1880 a weird and awful melodrama by J. R. Planché, entitled "The Day of Reckoning," was acted. It consisted of nine acts, the story of the last three being entirely different to that of the first six. This curious state of things was effectively symbolised by Mr. Claude Ponsonby, who appeared in a white shirt with a low collar, long hair, and a moustache, in the first six acts; and a jerkin of Lincoln green, short hair and a chin-beard, with no moustache, in the last three. Unfortunately "J" pulled up the curtain too soon one night on the final tableau, when Mr.

Ponsonby, having been killed by the stern stage-manager above alluded to, was rearranging himself for another death position in Mr. Streatfeild's arms. This situation saved an exceedingly dull play from the audience's point of view—but the language behind was so awful that "J" and the stage-manager incontinently fled to tell a few beads in a side chapel at Trinity. They were back in time, however, for the next piece that evening, "To Parents and Guardians," which gave great satisfaction.

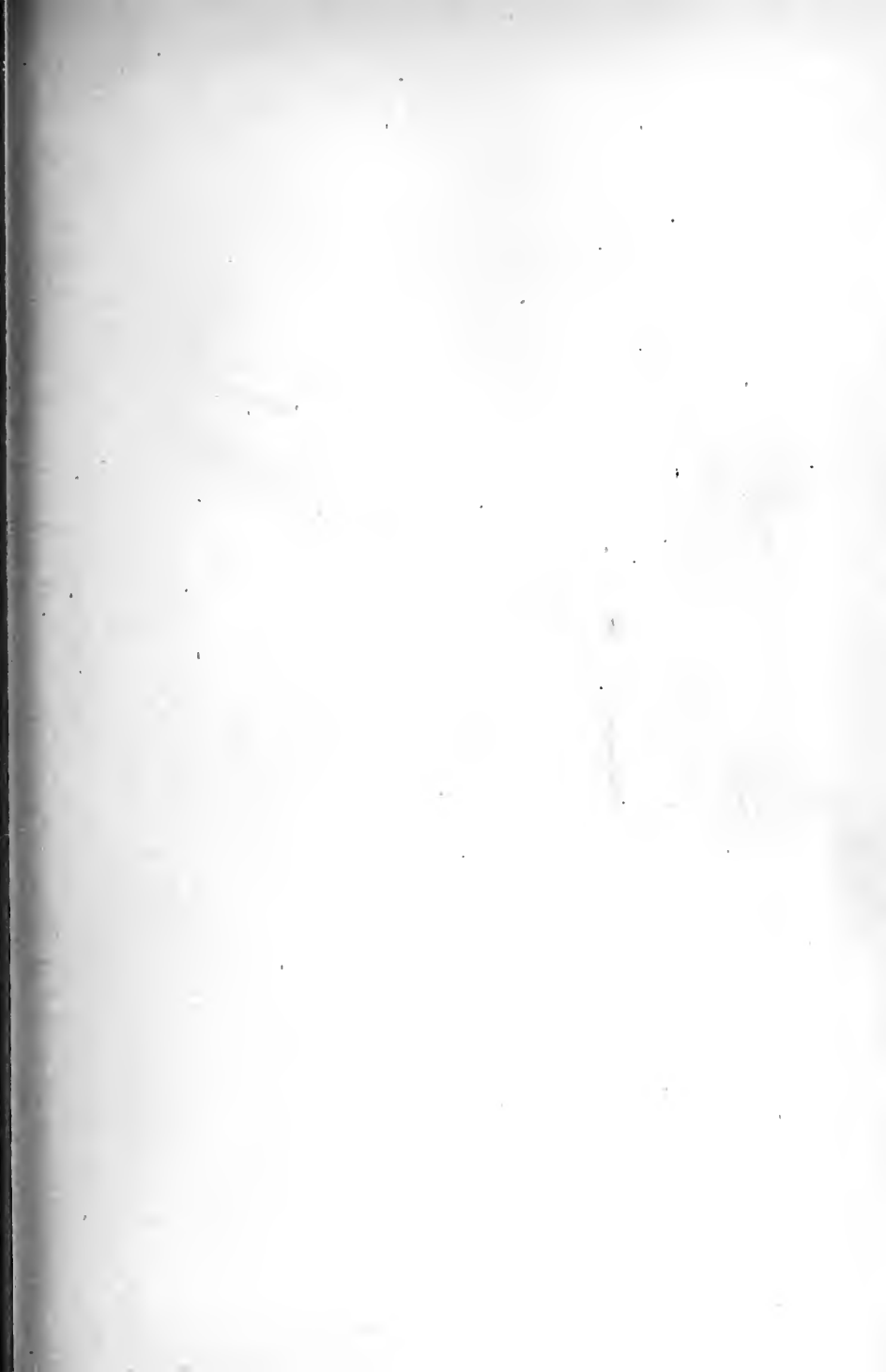
The production of the "Day of Reckoning" following after the "Game of Speculation," taken in conjunction with the financial condition of the Club after the twenty-fifth anniversary dinner, gave rise to a happy effort on the part of that facile epigrammatist, Mr. H. A. Newton, which is worthy of mention:—

"The Day of Reckoning! 1880,

. . . made a feast unto princes."

"A Day of Reckoning! What needs that note of exclamation!
Surely *that* usually succeeds a Game of Speculation."

It is no use being over modest about the success of the year 1881, a year notable for the very admirable production of the "School for Scandal." In fact, for general completeness, evenness, and finish—the result of long and arduous rehearsals—this play ran the famous "Ticket-of-Leave Man" of 1878 very hard. It was further marked by the first appearance on the A.D.C. boards of Mr. J. R. Manners, without doubt the very best impersonator of female parts ever seen at Cambridge. In appearance, movement, voice, and acting, his performance of Lady Teazle was quite wonderful. The records say that every one was good, some very good; the scenery





MR. J. R. MANNERS AS LADY TEAZLE IN "THE
SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

*From a photograph by Messrs. Hills & Saunders,
late of Cambridge.*

and mounting were first-rate, and a handsome surplus remained after paying all expenses. This was badly wanted at the time. Subjoined is the cast of this play—a feather in the cap of all those who took part therein. Cast, coached by Mr. Horace Wigan :—

“THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.”

| | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sir Peter Teazle | Mr. T. B. MILLER. |
| Sir Oliver Surface | Mr. H. A. NEWTON. |
| Joseph Surface | Mr. W. G. ELLIOT. |
| Charles Surface | Mr. E. M. LAWSON-SMITH. |
| Crabtree | Mr. J. E. GORST. |
| Sir Benjamin Backbite | Mr. C. DES GRAZ. |
| Careless | Mr. E. P. TENNANT. |
| Rowley | Mr. C. P. POWNEY. |
| Moses | Mr. A. POLHILL-TURNER. |
| Snake | Mr. E. J. GIBBONS. |
| Trip | Mr. D. H. PEPLOE. |
| Sir Harry Bumper (with song) | Mr. A. T. B. DUNN. |
| Sir Toby | Mr. F. B. MILDMAY. |
| Servant to Joseph | Hon. T. DUNDAS. |
| Servant to Lady Sneerwell | Mr. P. H. MARTINEAU. |
| Guests | { Messrs. G. W. E. LODER, OAKLEY, FARRER, and Hon. D. TOLLEMACHE. |
| Lady Teazle | Mr. J. R. MANNERS. |
| Mrs Candour | Mr. G. MILNER-GIBSON-CULLUM. |
| Lady Sneerwell | Mr. A. DRAKE. |
| Maria | Mr. J. ST. LEGER. |

In the preceding summer an unpleasant and somewhat fatiguing episode marred what is generally known as the “even tenour of our way.” It had no reference to any accident, to a chanter of highish songs dwelling in the same street, but concerned the Club page-boy, who was discovered to be an indulger in acts of larceny, embezzlement, multiplepointing—this is a Scotch law term—*lèse majesté*, and the taking up of money at *respondentia*, besides other minor offences connected with the wrongful acquisi-

tion of lucre ; in plain English, he had appropriated and converted Club moneys to his own use. When the facts came out, he was haled before the magistrates, *i.e.* the Committee, consisting of the Genial President and two others, these being the only three left up at the time. He then confessed that he had hidden the money in a field on the road towards Gogmagogs. The President and one other immediately volunteered to accompany the peccant youth to the spot and recover the lost treasure. The day was hot, the hour near lunch-time. The boy walked first, the Committee next. When they had arrived at the outskirts of Cambridge, having marched about five *parasangs*—as Xenophon hath it—from the A.D.C., the President felt genially faint. The faithful Committee man bounded into a shop and procured two buns and two glasses of old milk. A mild whisky and soda or two generally accompanied an A.D.C. lunch, and buns and milk were not much good. After toiling on for about five miles farther—well out into the country—the boy pointed out a plantation in the dim distance. “There,” he said, “lies the ill-gotten hoard.” Visions of Alberich snatching the gold from the three Rheintochters in Act I. of the “Rheingold” flashed through the President’s mind. On they went, haggard, yet heated. At last they reached the spot. Only one word, “Dig !” Upon which the boy burst into tears, and said the money was not there at all, but in the A.D.C.’s cupboard ! Both these gentlemen were supposed to be generally good at taking chaff, but for years afterwards it was not safe to mention this episode in their hearing. Once a young and joysome Freshman undertook to do so. A lonely tombstone, hard by the Senate House, now marks the spot, known only to academic torturers and their examinee-victims.

The "Critic" was performed in 1882, performed almost in its entirety, and with great success. No modern gags were allowed, and for once Sheridan reigned supreme. The Justice scene—now so seldom given—proved highly acceptable with Mr. J. E. Gorst, now a leading light in Egyptian administration, as the Justice. The late and ever-to-be-lamented Mr. Arthur Cecil Blunt, who was an honorary member of the Club, was busily coaching one day, and was quite overcome when the curtain went up on this episode. He had quite forgotten that it existed. The only scene omitted was that of the Italian Musician.

It was at this time that the celebrated "silent supper" was held in Mr. Gorst's rooms at Trinity. Many had been bidden, among them the late Lord Houghton and the late Mr. Corney Grain. At the last moment, however, the word went round that in order to keep in good odour with the powers it was absolutely necessary that there should be no noise. Now an A.D.C. supper without noise is like going in to Richardson on a kicking wicket—no fun. The Don who lived above Mr. Gorst's rooms, if not actually the master, was *proxime acc.*, and it was strictly enjoined that he be not disturbed. The supper was just about to be dispensed with, when a brilliant idea struck somebody. Why not have a *sotto voce* supper? They held it, and the success was great. The entire entertainment was carried through in whispers, including a comic sketch by Mr. Grain, and a speech made by the same individual in honour of Mr. Gorst's uncle, who was present on the occasion, a gentleman of retiring disposition, given to country pursuits and the art of bibliomancy, which, according to the dictionary, is "divination performed by selecting passages of Scripture at hazard." Mistaking him for Mr. Gorst's Right Hon. father, Mr. Grain delivered

an impassioned oration, eulogising his great political services. The party broke up at a late hour, still whispering, and next morning the Don, who slept above, remarked that they had evidently dispensed with the supper!

In May 1882 the Freemasons having entered into negotiations with Mr. Elin for the purchase of the Club freehold, a plan was submitted by Mr. Clark enabling the A.D.C. to make a proposal to the landlord, *i.e.* that of purchase. This was to cost £3500, and at the instigation of Mr. Clark, Messrs. Mortlock, the Cambridge bankers, kindly undertook to advance the sum required by way of mortgage on the freehold at four per cent., the Club to do its best to pay off the loan in instalments. Again Mr. Clark's services in connection with the carrying through of this transaction was invaluable. In 1890, £650 of the principal sum had been paid off, besides the regular payments of interest, and since that date further portions also, so that the debt now stands at about £2760. This must be taken as an entirely creditable piece of work, as since about 1883 the A.D.C. have had difficulties to contend with which never arose in its earlier stages. The principal of these was the establishment of the regular theatre. Those only who are constantly at Cambridge know what a difference this has made. Whereas, earlier, the A.D.C. annual acting stood alone, there is now the ever-present competition of this regular theatre for public favour; and had it not been for the fact that those in authority have most kindly permitted the resumption of the May term performances, wherein any profit that may accrue to the Club is generally made, things would have been in a bad way as far as continuance is concerned. The period between 1883 and 1888 was a very trying one

—before modern burlesque was revived—and somehow the Club fell out of public favour. This it seems now to have almost entirely regained; and if some fairy prince would arise to pay off the mortgage debt remaining of £2000 odd, there would be no fear for the future. It may be hoped that the occasion will produce the men.

Between 1883 and 1888 there were only two performances that need be alluded to at any length. These were the revival of the "Overland Route" in 1884, in which Mr. Montagu James scored largely as Sir Solomon, and Mr. Willie Bridgeman was so fascinating in the garb of an ayah, that he received, one day, a proposal of marriage, sent by a gentleman of dusky hue hailing from Christ's College, who had seen the play on the previous evening and thought he was the real thing.

In November 1886 they produced "King Henry IV., Part I." The idea of acting Shakespeare had been talked of for years. It was first mooted in Mr. Gardner's time, but until 1886 nothing had been done. It cannot exactly be said that the result was good. A sum of £90 was spent on the scenery, the dresses cost a great deal of money too, great pains were taken too by all concerned, but with the exception of Mr. Macklin as Hotspur, who was very fine, especially in his declamation, the performance was not very satisfactory, Mr. Hannen as Owen Glendower, and Mr. H. A. Newton—who had specially come up—as Falstaff being excepted. The undergraduates stayed away; some of the Dons came, but not enough. It must be remembered, too, that just about this time there was commencing that upheaval of taste wherein the majority of the London theatre-going public were transferring their patronage from the heavier to the lighter forms of entertainment. This was being felt at Cambridge, and it was a

bad time to try any play of this nature. It was no one's fault, but the choice was very unfortunate.

In May 1888, alterations were declared necessary by the local authorities to provide increased facilities for exit in case of fire, and it was thought advisable to make a further outlay in general improvements—*i.e.* to redecorate and reseat the theatre, make a second exit, and remove the gallery. An appeal to old members was decided upon, and eventually the above alterations were carried out to the great general improvement.

Although "Medea ; or, The Golden Fleece," a classical burlesque, was acted two years earlier, it was not till June 1888 when the first of a series of musical pieces, the "Sphinx," was produced, that the silver lining began to appear in the clouds. The inauguration of these rather go-as-you-please entertainments proved much more to the taste of modern audiences than the older fashioned style of play which had hitherto been the staple source of supply. They were only just in time. Although there were still many adverse factors, the turning point was at length reached. The "Sphinx" brought in a profit. The Hon. Walter Campbell kindly stage-managed the performance, wrote the piece up to date, as also the songs ; Messrs. W. H. Leese—now a rising barrister—Langworthy, and Hon. G. Willoughby—now Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, M.P. for Horncastle—were the heroes of the occasion, or rather the two heroes and heroine, for Mr. Langworthy was Jocasta, the heroine. There was a particular song, the words of which Mr. Langworthy never could remember, so as an aid to memory a large sheet of cardboard with the words thereon, stuck upon an elongated toasting-fork, was pushed on to the stage close to him, with the desired effect.

Some of the dialogue in this skit on the classics is worth quoting.

The Sphinx is dragging Jocasta off to his den to eat her.

Sph., as he drags her off—

And though this morsel may my dinner spoil,
After Jocasta comes Jo-castor-oil.

The good work was carried on. In June 1889 another marked success was made with a musical piece called "Nydia; or, The Very Last Days of Pompeii," by Mr. Leese, Mr. Willoughby, and Mr. Langworthy, which contained the following:—

Apœcides asks Arbaces what his name really is, as every one pronounces it differently.

Apœc. False quantity is not a thing for sport,

You've had me long, don't take me up so short.

Arb. Shut up, Apœcides.

Apœc. Short, he can't be wrong.

Arb. Shut up, Apœcides.

Apœc. Sold, I'm long!

Dr. Jackson, the celebrated classical tutor, was so delighted with this joke, that he came night after night to hear it. Mr. Willoughby, too, had a weird song, which ran thus:—

"Pretty polly, politechnico, pantechnicon,
Kitty katty, kata-leptico kamtulicon,
Huper Hipper, Hyper-critico Criterion,
Hagravating vaga vagabond Agamemnon."

It must be remembered that at this time the authorities had forbidden burlesque *qua* burlesque to be acted, this although the requisite permission was soon after kindly given. It was due, therefore, in a great measure to Mr. Willoughby, who was stage-manager at the time, that the

"Sphinx" was played. He was face to face with the problem of how to save the A.D.C. by acting a musical piece without calling it a burlesque. It was a happy idea to hit on a subject like the "Sphinx," which, being a skit on the "Ædipus," was at once allowed. Mr. Willoughby and Mr. Leese steered the Club through a very critical period in its career, and steered successfully.

In May 1889 the "Wedding March" was played. Lord Chelsea, Mr. Victor Cavendish, and the Hon. E. Fielding were very good, and Mr. Gilbert Hare scored largely as Woodpecker Tapping. In May 1890, Mr. Leese at the head of affairs, the burlesque of "Der Freischutz" was given. Another big go and very full houses, drawn no doubt by the following remark:—

Zamiel. We've a dramatic club too.

Caspar, alarmed.

Goodness me!

What, down in Hades?

Zamiel.

Yes, the Ha-des C—.

Lent 1891 was notable for a very admirable revival of the "Overland Route," which has been now acted four times at the A.D.C. This was the first appearance of Mr. H. R. Bromley-Davenport, the celebrated cricketer, who comes of a family of excellent cricketers, actors and actresses. He was quite one of the best men the A.D.C. have produced of late years, resembling in many ways Mr. J. W. Lowther in his knowledge of technique. He was at the head of affairs for some time at Cambridge. Not a part was badly acted in this production, Mr. Davenport, Mr. E. Grenfell, and Mr. Forster being particularly good; while it was difficult to say which were the cleverer, Mr. A. M. Balfour as Mrs. Sebright, or Mr. H. C. Norman as Mrs. Lovibond. Mr. Willie Bridgeman was rather missed. Cast:—

"THE OVERLAND ROUTE."

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sir Solomon Fraser | Mr. M. F. MACLEAN. |
| Mr. Colepepper | Mr. H. R. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT. |
| Major M'Turk | Mr. H. A. TROTTER. |
| Captain Clavering | Mr. E. C. GRENFELL. |
| Mr. Lovibond | Mr. K. SHARRATT. |
| Tom Dexter | Mr. A. FORSTER. |
| Moleskin | Mr. F. MEIGGS. |
| Limpet | Mr. W. H. THEOBALD. |
| Khitmagar | Hon. G. SAVILLE. |
| Captain Smart | Mr. J. LLEWELLYN. |
| Hardisty | Mr. W. NOBLE. |
| Tottle | Mr. C. H. ELLIS. |
| Captain Sebright | Mr. X. NOBLE. |
| Mrs. Sebright | Mr. A. M. BALFOUR. |
| Mrs. Lovibond | Mr. H. C. NORMAN. |
| Miss Colepepper | Mr. G. HESELTINE. |
| Miss Grimwood | Mr. F. W. STEPHENSON. |

Mr. Owen Hugh Smith, the genial Secretary of the time, shines all through this period as an admirable record-keeper and man of business, a reputation he has well maintained in after life.

In the May term 1891 the Committee took to giving suppers instead of the usual Sunday lunches, whence sprung a new rule, "Every one must sing, whether gifted with a voice or not." The result of this stringent regulation was in some cases pleasing, but in others caused a good deal of loss to farmers in the vicinity, owing to the sudden death of many of the ancient mothers of their calves.

The burlesque this term was "Ivanhoe à la Carte," which was especially aided by the introduction therein of a parody on the "Death of Nelson," written by the late Mr. J. K. Stephen, one whose early death will always be lamented. This song was sung with immense success

by Mr. Forster, and is reprinted without the kind permission of the editor of the *Granta*.

Recitative.

Surrounded by a melancholy crowd,
See *Granta* mourns the prematurely ploughed,
Nor lays the fatal instrument aside
With which her agricultural trade is plied.

'Twas in the month of June, one blazing afternoon,
Hard by the King's Parade,
The sad examinees, in mournful two's and three's,
Crept in, morose, dismayed.
The cold Invigilator's eye detects the succour lying nigh,
And quenches all suggestion. (*bis*)
The stony-hearted order ran, "Cambridge expects that every man
Will answer every question." (*bis*)

And now the questions boom ; along the affrighted room
Each pen is dropped in ink.
One man attempts them all, and, hearing duty's call,
He quite declines to shrink.
He scribbled on with frenzied pen,
Receiving no suggestion. (*bis*)
From sheet to sheet his answer ran,—oh let us not forget the man
Who tried at every question. (*bis*)

The last, last question, a dark and fatal one,
Our Hero's pen, our Hero's pen essayed.
"I'm done at last," he cried ; "the Lord is on their side,
I'm ruined and betrayed ;
For honours I have vainly tried, a 'Poll' must satisfy my pride,
My friends gave no suggestion." (*bis*)

They ploughed that miserable man,
But owned that it had been his plan
To try at every question. (*bis*)

Mr. J. W. Clark was this year appointed Registrar of the University, a post he has since continued to fill with grace and dignity. Congratulations from all.

In 1893 Mr. R. L. Thornton, who had gone down in 1887, kindly came up to play Bob Brierly in the "Ticket-of-Leave Man," now revived, and seems to have been very good in the part. The *Granta*, in its critique on the performance, remarks on the old-fashioned style of the play. "The good people are very good; the bad, never anything but bad." Now this is a sort of criticism that would never have been dreamed of in the sixties and seventies. Audiences and critics in those days were not in the habit of going into these questions. Nevertheless the *Granta's* remark is perfectly true. In older fashioned melodramas, of which the "Ticket-of-Leave Man" is a very admirable specimen, the good people are always quite perfect, and the villains unutterably black. The heroine too, as a rule, is so frightfully good, that in real life she would bore the hero to distraction. In construction and characterisation there is no better melodrama. Still, a careful inquiry into what the present day A.D.C. audiences like and what they do not like, seems to show that while they are prepared for any amount of frivolity and irresponsibility in musical pieces, they are not very keen about the older styles of play that used to be popular then. They demand greater *vraisemblance* than these pieces afford. The difficulty of choosing plays, therefore, becomes greater every year, especially as certain subjects with which the more modern drama deals are of necessity tabooed at Cambridge. The future of the Club seems rather to lie in the direction of burlesque and musical comedy in the May term, and triple bills and revivals of old English comedy at other times.

In the summer of 1893 they held a ball in the May week for the first time in history; one hundred and eighty were present; dancing in the auditorium, the stage

arranged for sitting out, and supper in the green-room. During the progress of the festivities the electric light suddenly went out, but the inevitable Whiteley saved the situation, by appearing suddenly through a trap-door to the sound of a gong, and laden with lighted candles. The rooms were what local journals always call "tastefully decorated." This year the subscription was lowered to £1, 10s., and a large number of new members were elected.

During the bad times, *i.e.* 1887, an attempt was made to revive interest in the Club by means of Smoking Concerts. They were highly successful for some time; and it is interesting to notice that, by reference to a programme of one held in 1894, there appear items by Chopin, Mande White, Popper, Tosti, Godard, Ries, Liszt, and Schumann. The University is evidently improving! The programme of the first "smoker" ever held in 1887, on the other hand, does not contain one good song. This was pointed out to the then manager of the concert. He was highly indignant, thinking that the complainant could not know much about the subject. This he subsequently emphasised by pointing to one ditty in the list with a triumphant gesture. It was "White Wings"!

In the Lent term of 1894 the triple bill of "Trying it On," "The Duchess of Bayswater," and "To Parents and Guardians," actually shows a profit, the first for some years, out of the May term. Ever since the revival of burlesque, those in authority had always looked to May acting to recoup them for the losses sustained at other times. A hopeful sign for the future.

In June 1894 money was again made, as much as £300 gross being taken. The draw on this occasion was a new and original burlesque, entitled "Jupiter





MR. R. A. AUSTEN LEIGH AS THE BEDMAKER IN "JUPITER, LL.D."

From a photograph by Messrs. Stearn, Cambridge.

LL.D.," written by Mr. R. C. Lehmann, the well-known oarsman and coach, with music by Mr. T. Tertius Noble, the organist of Ely Cathedral. This was indeed a very capital production. Mr. Lehmann shone in his lyrics and Mr. Noble in his music, the only fault of which was that the treatment was a little too elaborate for the subject, although extremely clever and musicianly; while Mr. Lehmann's lyrics were so good that his dialogue suffered a little in comparison. But the idea was excellent and original;—the notion of a young undergraduate suddenly planted among the gods and goddesses of Olympus; the Vice-Chancellor beset by a college of ladies; and a scene in the Old Court of Trinity. The house was crowded at every performance. Mr. "Venus" Martineau, as the Gay Undergraduate, danced quite admirably, and his acting was what country newspapers style as "most pleasing, and of great acceptance." Mr. W. Burns, Mr. d'Hauteville, and the Hon. F. W. Egerton, too, were quite in their best form. But the triumph of the performance was the song and dance of the "bed-makers" in Act III., in which Mr. A. L. Harrison was very good, and Mr. R. A. Austen-Leigh was quite splendid. His performance of a decrepit bed-maker was one of the best and most artistic bits of impersonation ever seen on the A.D.C. boards. Through the great kindness of the Vice-Chancellor, the usual number of nights was exceeded.

Michaelmas 1894. Grand reappearance of the Tutors, who had been most gentle and—if such a word may be used—lathanistic for a decade or so. They laid down the following new rules:—

1. Suppers to be discouraged.
2. Every one to undertake to be in College by 12 P.M.
3. Those who still hankered after suppers to obtain

leave from the Vice-Chancellor, as well as the Senior Proctor, such leave to be given for one night only, and in no case on Saturdays.

4. The Club to do its best to perform, as far as possible, works of literary excellence and acknowledged merit.

5. No date to clash with Examinations.

A characteristic effusion from the pen of the late Mr. Corney Grain is worth noticing here, in answer to a request from Mr. Martineau that he would come up and assist at a "smoker":—

"Dear Venus, who lives in the Lane,
'Tis with feelings of grief and of pain
That I write to say 'No,' I'm engaged as a 'Pro,'
On the 2nd—Yours, R. Corney Grain."

No one was kinder than Mr. Grain in helping these concerts with his presence and songs whenever he was enabled to get away.

The Minutes state that in March 1895 the Club was considered in a good condition.

In the same month the "Rivals" was acted for the first time for many years, and with very great success; indeed the success was so marked, that it was decided to dispense with the burlesque and act it in the May following, when a very handsome profit was made, viz., £130 net. This revival and "Jupiter LL.D." have been the two big financial draws which the Club have made lately; and it is doubtful if, even at the time when things were much easier than they are now, any larger profit has been made. Probably the "Ticket-of-Leave Man" and the "School for Scandal" come nearest. It is indeed cheering to see Sheridan so appreciated there. Mr. Burnand spoke most

highly of the acting in *Punch*, and in a thoroughly admirable cast Mr. Austen-Leigh as Mrs. Malaprop, and Mr. A. W. Watson as Captain Absolute, were pre-eminent. Mr. Geikie, too, was very good. Cast :—

“THE RIVALS.”

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Sir Anthony Absolute | Mr. R. GEIKIE. |
| Captain Absolute | Mr. A. W. WATSON. |
| Falkland | Mr. A. L. HARRISON. |
| Bob Acres | Mr. R. BALFOUR. |
| Sir Lucius O'Trigger | Mr. J. J. MURPHY. |
| Fag | Mr. E. TALBOT. |
| David | Mr. E. M. CLARK. |
| Coachman | Mr. A. H. FINCH. |
| Servant | Mr. J. S. CAVENDISH. |
| Mrs. Malaprop | Mr. R. A. AUSTEN-LEIGH. |
| Lydia Languish | Mr. F. G. D'HAUTEVILLE. |
| Julia | Mr. A. R. JELF. |
| Lucy | Hon. O. BRIDGEMAN. |
| Maid | Mr. C. E. AGAR. |

There was an extraordinary epidemic of illness in connection with this revival. Three days before the date of commencement Mr. P. d'Hauteville took the influenza and retired gracefully. He was succeeded in his part at this short notice by Mr. E. Talbot, who was not acting up to that time. On the morning of the dress rehearsal Mr. Pike went down with the same complaint, and on the morning of the last performance Mr. F. d'Hauteville “was took,” and then down went Mr. Jelf! But somehow all the parts were filled, and on the other occasion this year that the play was given there was no fatalities.

It is indeed pleasant to chronicle two big successes two years running. The “Lyons Mail”—Mr. J. W. Clark's version—was revived in 1896, and was quite

excellently done. The acting was very even indeed all round, besides being in some cases very good. The best performance of all was Mr. R. Balfour's Joliquet. It will be remembered that this version of the "Courier de Lyons" is so arranged that Joliquet, Jerome Lesurques' servant, becomes practically the principal part. Mr. Clark arranged it thus for Mr. Herbert Gardner. Mr. Balfour, who is the youngest of a very talented family, showed remarkable qualifications on this occasion. His elder brother was the Mrs. Sebright in the "Overland Route" of 1891, and the junior member has well kept up the family reputation. It is much to be regretted that another highly-gifted brother, Mr. A. E. Balfour, who was at Cambridge a little earlier, never appeared on the A.D.C. boards. Judging by this gentleman's later successes in impromptu romantic opera and in representations of early biblical heroes, there is no doubt that with the aid of the usual rehearsals he would have developed into a histrion of striking force.

A funny incident occurred during the representation of the "Lyons Mail." In the last act, Mr. Balfour as Joliquet had to be shot by Mr. Watson as Dubosc. When the moment came the pistol failed to go off. There was a ghastly pause—seemingly of hours—during which the two stood glaring at each other, not knowing what to do, when suddenly the well-known voice of Clarkson was heard at the wings—"Mr. Balfour! say you're stabbed!"

In an earlier act, too, when Joliquet was concealed in a cellar below the stage, the cue came for him to reappear. Not a sign. Every one who was acting imagined he had gone to sleep, whereas, in fact, he was so carried away by his imagination that he was mentally evolving a dramatic picture of the play below ground, and never heard the cue. At last he was brought to himself by hearing the following

words over his head spoken by Mr. E. M. Clark: "Joliquet, Joliquet; d——n you, Reggie, come up!"

In the excellent cast now given, it should be mentioned that Messrs. Geikie, Watson, and Talbot were all particularly good. Cast :—

"THE LYONS MAIL."

| | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------|-------------------------|
| Dubosc | } | | Mr. A. W. WATSON. |
| Lesurques | | | |
| Jerome Lesurques | | | Mr. R. GEIKIE. |
| Dorval | | | Mr. F. G. D'HAUTEVILLE. |
| Joliquet | | | Mr. R. BALFOUR. |
| Choppard | | | Mr. W. PIKE. |
| Fouinard | | | Mr. P. G. D'HAUTEVILLE. |
| Couriol | | | Mr. E. M. CLARK. |
| Didier | | | Mr. E. TALBOT. |

In June 1896 the "Commission" and the "Romantic Idea" were played; and in November of the same year a triple bill, "The First Night," "Our Bitterest Foe," and "A Nice Firm."

Next year, June 1897, a very interesting revival of Lord Lytton's play, "Money," all the more interesting as the dramatist's grandson acted the leading part, Alfred Evelyn. All accounts go to show that the present Lord Lytton was quite first-rate. He seems to have in him all the serio-romantic, Byronic, sarcastic qualities which are absolutely necessary to carry the character. The part requires not only these gifts, but also those of nerve and firmness; it must be "held," as it were, all through, for Evelyn is not a very sympathetic person in these days. Besides this, Lord Lytton did as any good artist does—he took an immense amount of pains over his whole presentation. Mr. J. B. Dyne as Lady Franklin; Mr. Edward Clark, son of Mr. J. W. Clark, as Sir Frederick

Blount ; Mr. St. John Wayne as Graves ; and the Hon. R. E. C. Guinness of Diamond Sculls fame as the Old Member, were all excellent. Again a profit was declared.

The May term 1898 saw the production of the "Ballad Monger," which Mr. Beerbohm Tree was kind enough to allow—a special permission on his part to Mr. J. W. Clark, as the piece has never been acted in England except by Mr. Tree himself. From all accounts the performance was well up to the average, while Lord Lytton's Louis XI. and Mr. R. Balfour's Gringoire were certainly very good. The play was followed by Planché's "Medea ; or, The Golden Fleece" for the second time within ten years, with new songs by Messrs. E. C. Kellett and R. C. Lehmann, and new music by Mr. T. Tertius Noble and Mr. J. St. A. Johnson. The burlesque went as well as ever, special successes being made by Messrs. R. C. Herz and G. F. S. Bowles, who delighted every one. The theatre was full nightly, and once more, to the general gratification, there was a good surplus left after paying expenses. Then, according to the Minutes, "the Committee retired for a well-earned rest," an example shortly to be followed by the inditer of this history.

This completes the records of the A.D.C. up to the present date. Looking ahead, it is interesting to note that in February 1905 the Club will hold its fiftieth anniversary ; one which will no doubt be worthy of the occasion, for it will certainly be an occasion. That a society of young men banded together in the year 1855 to do a little quiet acting in rooms should have developed as it has is very remarkable, none the less so when the fact is considered that these young men are never together for long. A strong nucleus cannot practically be kept together for more than two successive years. When it is

clearly understood, too, that the A.D.C. is pre-eminently a social club, that is to say, that the fact of a man being known as a good actor is not of itself sufficient to gain him admittance, it will be seen that the difficulty of constantly recruiting people of talent who are also gifted with social qualities is a somewhat formidable one. But the fact remains that with very few exceptions in this respect the A.D.C. has ever since its foundation adhered to this policy, and has also been enabled to carry it out successfully. The acting nowadays is quite as good as it ever was. In every society of this nature that bears the mark of years on its brow, there must of necessity be strong and weak periods, but old members will be happy to hear that the future of the Club seems quite safe in this respect.

That Cambridge in its amateur performances reflects the tone and taste of the day has been alluded to earlier. There is no harm in saying that the go-as-you-please burlesque of 1898 is as different to the burlesque of Mr. Burnand's time as modern comedy is from old-fashioned melodrama, and old burlesque and old melodrama are out of fashion. The conditions of the day too, wherein the existence of the regular theatre plays such an important part, have evolved this fact, that burlesque will always pay during the May week, and occasionally old comedy too, while it is difficult to know what to act at other times. The answer seems to be—based on the experience of the last two or three years—that triple bills of one-act plays, well rehearsed and acted, but inexpensively mounted and dressed, and an occasional expedition into old comedy, are the best sort of pieces for the October or Lent terms. It is gratifying to know that a further instalment of the loan above referred to has been paid off lately. That it may one day be paid off in its entirety is the desire of all

who take an interest in the Club's welfare. There are many such, as well there may be. Acting in after life, whether undertaken as a business or a pleasure, is seldom quite the same as it was at Cambridge. Jealousy is there reduced to a minimum, self-advertisement is an unknown quantity, good feeling is conspicuous by its presence. The fact too that although there is plenty of hard work and rehearsal the whole thing is not taken *too* seriously by those engaged therein, is a blessing for which it is necessary to give much thanks. That the A.D.C. may long continue to flourish on these lines is the fervent desire of all her sons.

VI

THE AMATEUR PANTOMIME OF 1878 AND THE AMATEUR BURLESQUE OF 1881

By W. YARDLEY.

"THE FORTY THIEVES"

PLAYED at the Gaiety Theatre, London, on the after-
noons of Wednesday, 13th February, and Wednesday,
10th April, and at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, on the
evening of Saturday, 9th March 1878.

PROGRAMME

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND.

Sole Lessee and Manager . . . Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, 13TH FEBRUARY 1878.

Open at 2. Begin at 2.30. Carriages at 5.15.

344TH MATINÉE.

For the Benefit of a Theatrical Charity.

THE FORTY THIEVES.

PANTOMIME BURLESQUE

WRITTEN BY

Messrs. R. REECE, W. S. GILBERT, F. C. BURNAND, AND
HENRY J. BYRON,

And performed (excepting the ladies) by Amateurs.

Produced under the direction of JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Stage Manager Mr. R. SOUTAR.
Pantomimic Instructor Mr. J. D'AUBAN.
Musical Director HERR MEYER LUTZ.

CHARACTERS.

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Ali Baba . . . | (<i>A Wood-cutter</i>) . . . | Captain GOOCH. |
| Ganem | (<i>His Son</i>) | Mr. W. F. QUINTIN. |
| Cassim | (<i>His Brother</i>) . . . | Mr. ALGERNON BASTARD. |
| Hassarac . . | (<i>Captain of the Forty Thieves</i>) . | Mr. JOS. MACLEAN. |
| Abdallah . . . | (<i>His Lieutenant</i>) . . | { Miss HELEN BARRY. (Mrs. A. ROLLS.) |
| Mesrour | } <i>Gentlemen of</i> } " <i>The Forty</i> ." } (<i>The Deserv-</i> } <i>ing Hanging</i> } <i>Committee.</i>) | Mr. F. H. M'CALMONT. |
| Benridden | | Mr. W. "WYE." |
| Mustapha | | Mr. LESLIE WARD. |
| Saad | | Mr. GILBERT FARQUHAR. |
| Beder | | Hon. F. PARKER. |
| Nouredin | | Mr. W. HIGGINS. |
| Assad | | Major ROLLS. |
| The Trumpeter . . | | Mr. A. STUART-WORTLEY. |

The remainder of the Forty Thieves represented by Messrs. E. Darrell, W. Wye, J. Westropp, J. Cumming, C. Ringrose, C. Daly, Hugh Drummond, J. Graham, Cecil Chapman, A. B. Cook, Benson, and Amphlett, and Hon. C. Vivian, &c. ; also twenty young ladies who have kindly given their services by permission of the Manager and Directors of THE ALHAMBRA.

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Morgiana | Miss LYDIA THOMPSON. |
| Cogia | Miss ELEANOR BUFTON. |
| The Good Fairy | Miss LUCY BUCKSTONE. |

SCENE 1.—"Exterior of Ali Baba's House," written by Mr. R. REECE.

SCENE 2.—"The Wood," written by Mr. W. S. GILBERT.

SCENE 3.—"Interior of Ali Baba's House," written by Mr. F. C. BURNAND.

SCENE 4.—"The Cave," written by Mr. HENRY J. BYRON.

THE TRANSFORMATION.

CHARACTERS IN THE HARLEQUINADE.

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Clown | Mr. W. "WYE." | Butcher | Hon. F. PARKER. |
| Harlequin . . | Mr. W. S. GILBERT. | Butcher's Boy . . | Mr. C. DALY. |
| Pantaloon . . | Mr. T. KNOX HOLMES. | Baker | Mr. L. WARD. |
| Policeman . . | Captain H. E. COLVILLE. | Sweep | Mr. W. HIGGINS. |
| Swell | Lord DE CLIFFORD. | Waiter | Mr. J. WESTROPP. |
| Artist | Mr. LESLIE WARD. | Ung Mossoo | Mr. A. BASTARD. |
| Tailor | Mr. W. F. QUINTIN. | A Gent | Mr. A. B. COOK. |
| Bricklayer . . | Mr. J. GRAHAM. | Columbine | Mdlle. ROSA. |
| Butterman . . | Mr. C. RINGROSE. | Old Woman | Mr. F. H. M'CALMONT. |

SCENE 1.—"A Quiet Street."

SCENE 2.—"An Equally Quiet Bedroom."

It was at the merry little Beefsteak Club, then located at 24 King William Street, Strand, that the idea of an Amateur Pantomime originated in the year 1878. Whether it was that the resuscitation of the Beefsteak Club—which had passed into a trance for many years, to be brought to life again by Archibald Stuart-Wortley, the late Corney Grain, "Billy" Morris, the late lamented Montagu Williams, Augustus Spalding, and half a score other good fellows in the year 1876—suggested the notion of a revival of Amateur Pantomime, which had been produced with marked success exactly a quarter of a century previously, or whether it was the outcome of the general exuberance of high spirits that possessed us all in those "happy, those halcyon days," I cannot undertake to aver. The notion was no sooner conceived than we set to work to carry it out; and to carry out any such undertaking meant doing so absolutely and thoroughly, and with no such word as "failure" in our dictionary—if making a business of a pleasure could by any possibility eliminate such a word from the English language.

What was the first thing to do? What we *did* was to resolve ourselves into an utterly informal committee, in which it was unanimously resolved to approach the only man in the theatrical world who was by any possibility the right individual to assist us in our ambitious project.

That man was John Hollingshead, who was at that period controlling the destinies of the Gaiety Theatre with such marked success.

"Practical John," by which name he was then known, and for the matter of that is still known, was "one of us." He was a member of the Club, and he was as youthful in his enthusiasm as any of us to bring the venture to a successful issue, despite the fact that he had played the

rôle of Pantaloon in the Amateur Pantomime a quarter of a century before, though that circumstance did not make him out to be more than middle-aged. To him in those days the term "difficulty" had apparently no intelligibility; and yet to us, as may be easily imagined, when "we got down to hard pan," the difficulties appeared insuperable.

"Practical John" laughed them to scorn, and by his nonchalant method of treating a trifling little matter, such as a set of raw amateurs daring to challenge comparison with skilled professionals in what is rightly or wrongly considered to be one of the most difficult forms of histrionism, *almost* persuaded us to view the matter through his own *pince-nez*.

I say *almost* advisedly, for had we not been possessed of, and acted upon, a basis of fairly commendable modesty (for amateurs), we should probably have achieved a fiasco as complete in its way as our success proved most happily to be.

This, for one of the moving spirits in the enterprise, may seem to be a somewhat vainglorious assertion, but what I am attempting to do is to write history—of a sort—and not to offer apologies.

I could quote chapter and verse galore in proof of the venture having proved a success far beyond our fondest anticipations, by inserting in this article the press criticisms that followed our efforts; but newspaper notices (especially of amateur performances) are, I am confident, of so little interest, except to those who form atomic portions of the integral, that I leave it to those who may have their curiosity sufficiently aroused on the subject to refer to the back files of the journals of twenty years ago to satisfy that curiosity.

But to return to our muttons—or rather to our Beef-steaks—we went to work under the genial guidance of “Practical John” to secure the very best available amateur *male* talent, for we dared not venture upon any attempt at persuading amateur ladies to participate in our crime.

In those days the lady amateur was either too high-class for such truck as Pantomime, or too diffident.

The best-known lady amateurs of that period, I may state (*passim*), have become more or less successful professionals subsequently for comparatively brief careers, and in lines very far removed from Pantomime.

In Lydia Thompson, Eleanor Bufton, Helen Barry, Lucy Buckstone, and Mademoiselle Rosa, who one and all not only entered with alacrity and whole-heartedness into the spirit of the undertaking, we secured about as good a quintette of professional talent for our purpose as was available at that time.

To them, judging from the way they set to work from the word “go,” the experience was a huge delight. They were not only of inestimable value as *artistes* (hateful term, but the only one available), but by their unflagging devotion to the cause in which they enlisted, their cheeriness, cheerfulness, and tactful assistance in the way of unobtrusive hints and painstaking work, amounting practically to downright drudgery, in instilling into the male intelligence the “business” of the real stage, they were indubitably enormous factors in the general success that eventuated.

We also felt that an entertainment of the magnitude of a “Pantomime Burlesque”—for that is the term by which we compromised our ambitious project—would need a bit of brightening in the way of the female form divine in our “crowd”; and as “Practical John” preferred that

no one connected with the Gaiety Theatre, which was of course the one and only theatre at which such a performance could have been given, should take part, he promptly solved the vexed question from what source we were to seek fair volunteers to assist us, by going to the Manager and Directors of the Alhambra, and obtaining their consent for the appearance of twenty young ladies of the chorus of that establishment—where they at that time employed chorus as well as ballet—to form the attractive half of the immortal “Forty.”

A very charming contingent of young ladies they were too, both in appearance and in the *esprit de corps* they displayed, by the loyalty and devotion with which they attended rehearsals with the most praiseworthy regularity, and the strict attention they paid to business. It must be remembered that they were all volunteers, and beyond, I presume, actual expenses out of pocket, worked for the fun of the thing, and in the cause of charity only.

But I am somewhat anticipating.

The first thing to be settled was the subject, which was the simplest matter of the lot ; for “The Forty Thieves” did not call for too many important principal characters, and afforded the more diffident or less ambitious amateurs numerous opportunities of small (*very* small most of them) speaking parts. It also gave scope to members of the “gang” to indulge in a mild and harmless form of humour in the way of “making up” to represent various public characters, some famous, others notorious.

Having settled upon the subject, who was to write the “book”? Here again the genius of “Practical John” rose to the occasion without hesitation. It was not to be reasonably expected that any one of our well-

known light writers of the time would undertake to gratuitously devote his valuable time and energies to the task of writing an entire Pantomime for a parcel of amateurs, even in the glorious cause of charity. Four letters from our practical manager to the four best of our burlesque writers (and burlesques *were* burlesques in those days), and Messrs. Robert Reece, W. S. Gilbert, F. C. Burnand, and Henry J. Byron had one and all cheerfully consented to write a scene each, which four scenes were to constitute the "opening."

So far nothing could be better.

The casting of the opening was a matter of comparative simplicity. The majority of the amateur talent of the day was to be found in the Beefsteak Club ; but it was by no means intended from the start to make it a Club performance, and all the best available amateurs, whether members of the Club or not, were approached to assist. The majority of the best-known amateur actors outside the Beefsteak Club, whose names need not be particularised as they took no part in the performance which forms the subject of this article, declined on the ground that Pantomime was a phase of histrionic art altogether outside their experience or ambition.

That is where they differed from us who did take part, *i.e.* in the "ambition." Our inexperience in Pantomime was as great as theirs ; but the proverb that relates to one class of being rushing in where another class fears to tread had no terrors for us, who were doubtless regarded as well qualified for the former of the two above-mentioned classes.

To the best of my memory, the only man not belonging to the Club who had the courage to undertake a leading rôle was Mr. Joseph Maclean, an amateur of more than

considerable experience, especially in burlesque, and a dancer of exceptional ability. To him was entrusted the rôle of Hassarac, the Captain of the Forty; and certainly the choice was a very wise one, for the neatness and nimbleness of his dancing proved most successful features of the performance, whilst his stage "business" and general appreciation of the right methods of pantomime had the true touch about them.

To such a well-known and thoroughly experienced, naturally-gifted comedian as Mr. Quintin Twiss, a genuine star of the first magnitude in such well-established amateur firmaments as the Canterbury "Old Stagers," the "Windsor Strollers," the Cambridge "A.D.C.," to which he was affiliated on account of his dramatic prowess at the sister university, to which he belonged, and in the success of which he was an extremely important factor, as has been amply testified by Mr. F. C. Burnand in his highly entertaining book on the most remarkable University Amateur Dramatic Club ever daringly conceived and brilliantly carried out, the character of Ganem belonged almost by right, and absolutely without dispute or cavil.

No better choice could possibly have been made. He revelled in the fun of the thing from beginning to end, and the infection of his humour, which, despite its modest quietness, was eternally bubbling over, spread through the entire company, and materially assisted in the establishment of the *entente cordiale* which prevailed throughout the company, and was perhaps not the least remarkable feature of a truly remarkable performance.

Mr. Twiss, by the way, figures in the programme as Mr. "W. F. Quintin," an important official position necessitating, in the summer-time of his life, a pseudonym when engaged in such frivolous work as play-acting.

For reasons best known to himself he did not appear on this occasion under his celebrated *nom de théâtre* in the amateur stage-world of "Oliver Twist."

He cannot be passed by in connection with this particular appearance as an amateur without a word of unqualified praise for his Tailor in the Harlequinade. He had but little to do, but his performance was a gem of genuine water.

Captain Arthur Gooch, a shining light of the "Windsor Strollers," and a most experienced amateur actor, who subsequently joined the ranks of the Canterbury "Old Stagers," with great benefit to that most venerable and venerated body of amateur histrions, fitted, as it were, naturally into the character of Ali Baba, and his performance left nothing to be desired.

Mr. Algernon Bastard, an amateur of a wide range of experience of a cosmopolitan order—for he had been in the habit of playing in French almost as much as in English—cheerfully undertook what was perhaps the least satisfactory rôle in the cast of principals, that of Cassim, in which he made as much as was possible of rather slender opportunities. He got in his fine work, however, and made one of the most pronounced hits in the Pantomime as Ung Mossoo in the Harlequinade.

The eccentric "abandon," funny to a degree without being in the least vulgar, of his "can-can," with Mr. F. H. M'Calmont as an Old Woman, cannot fail to live in the memories of those who saw it, as an unique specimen of spontaneous saltatory genius. It was one of those surprises to have been seen and not to be described.

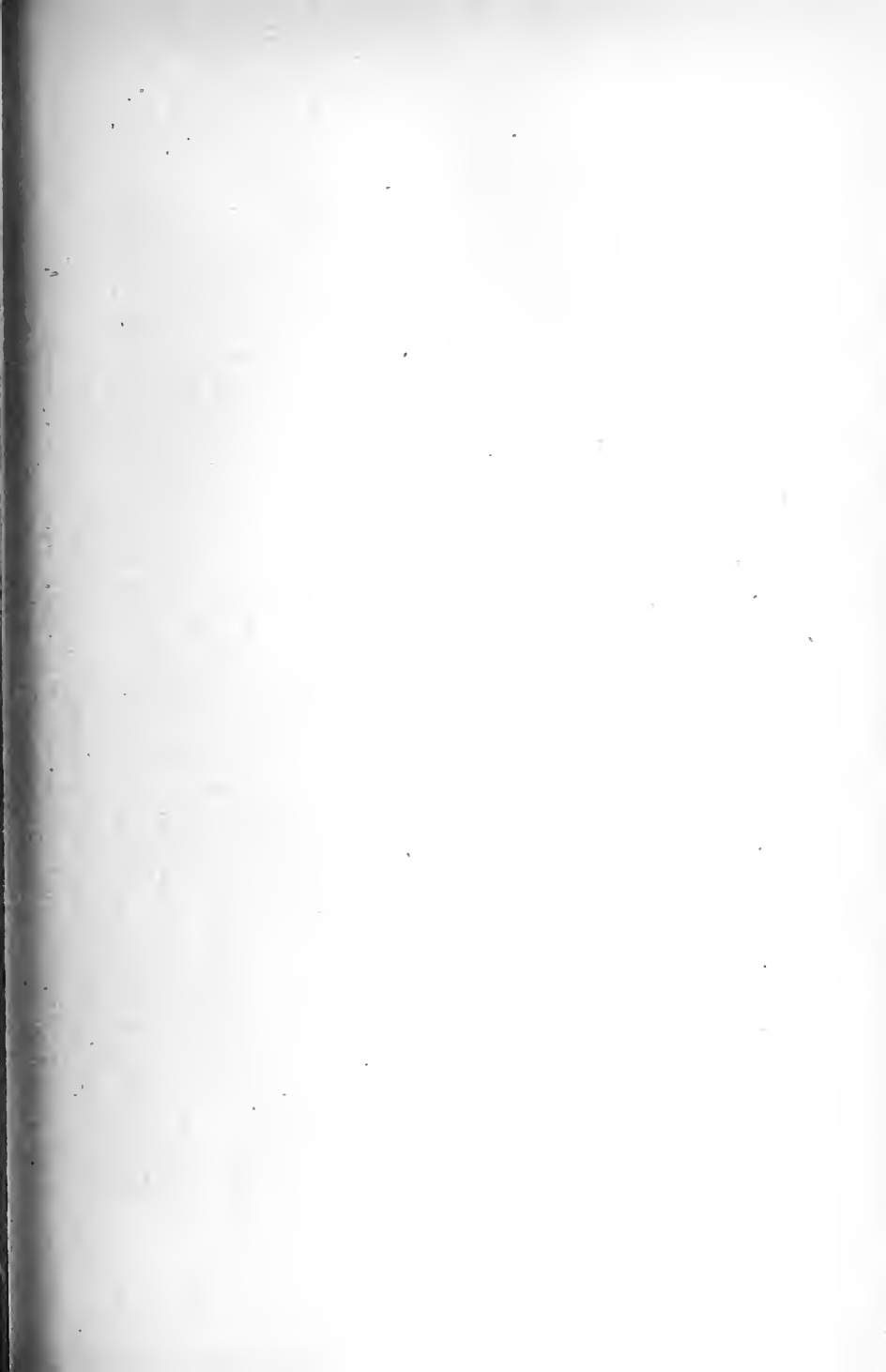
The above-mentioned quartette of gentlemen constituted the principal "speaking parts," so far as the amateurs were concerned.

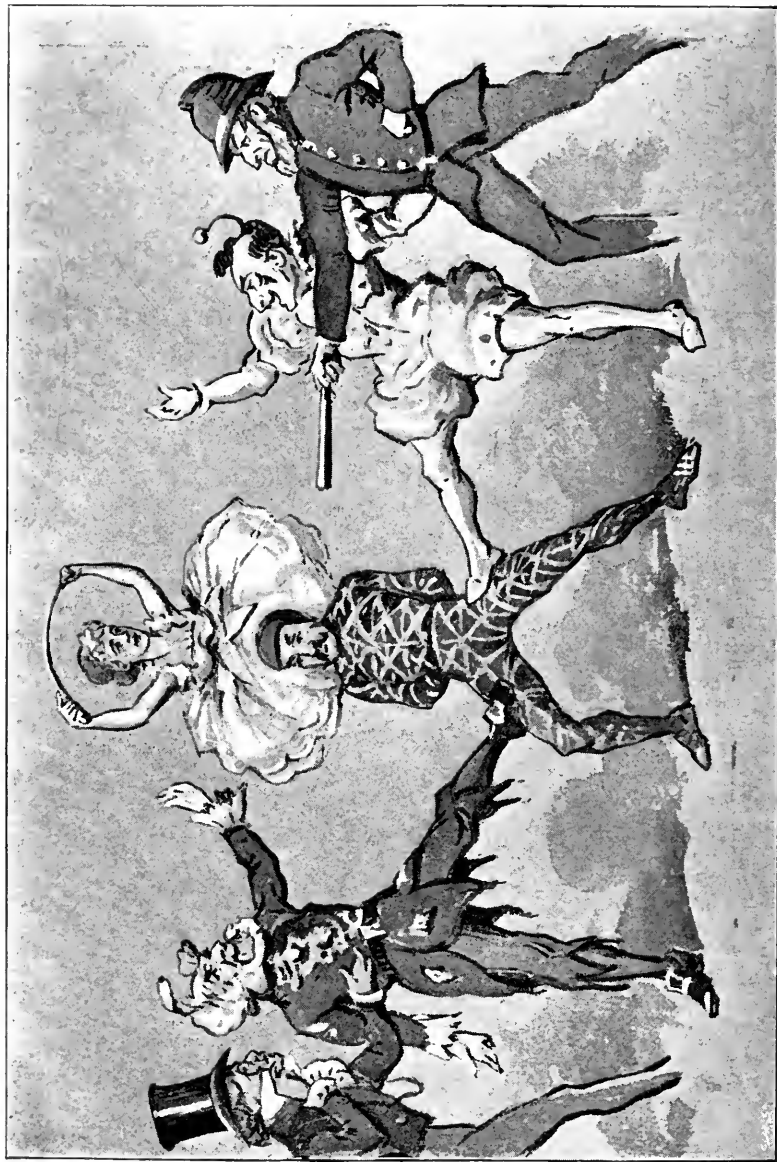
But the minor characters managed to get in a lot of fun, with quaint lines here and there, and really good, well-thought-out business, the principal scorer amongst them being Mr. A. Stuart-Wortley as The Trumpeter, whose quaint antics and loose-jointed agility achieved for him the pronounced honour of being compared to the hitherto incomparable Fred Vokes. This circumstance no doubt consoled him considerably for a great disappointment that befell him in connection with the original order of thing regarding the cast of characters, of which more anon in its proper place.

Mention has already been made of the ladies who so gallantly undertook what must have appeared to them the most formidable task of their stage careers, from the point of view of hard work. Suffice it to state as briefly as possible that Miss Lydia Thompson as Morgiana was the absolute sheet-anchor of the show. Had any drag occurred, she would have been ready on the spot, staunch to check it in a moment. As it was, all she had to do, and did, was to strike the key-note, and everybody was in harmony with her, both on the stage and in the audience.

The stately Helen Barry, originally of "Babil and Bijou" fame at Covent Garden, when she made her first appearance as a gorgeous Amazon leader, was cast for the character of Abdallah, the Lieutenant of the Forty Thieves. I believe I am right in stating that she emerged for this occasion specially from the retirement into which she had gone on her marriage with Major Rolls, who himself took part in the performance.

Handsome Eleanor Bufton, with the most musical and infectious of laughs on or off the stage, was a delightful Cogia.





MRS. W. S. GILBERT, THE LATE MRS. T. HOLMES, MRS. W. YARDLEY, MAJOR-GEN.-GEN. SIR H. E. COLVILLE, THE LATE LORD DUKE CLIFFORD, AND MRS. ROSA, AS HARLEQUIN, PANTALON, CLOWN, POLICEMAN, SWELL, and COLUMBINE, in "The Amateur Pantomime."

Pretty Lucy Buckstone, daughter of the celebrated old "Bucky" of Haymarket fame, was an ideal, good Fairy, and there was the cast of the "opening" complete.

But the Harlequinade was quite another affair. To our great relief and general astonishment Mr. W. S. Gilbert volunteered to undertake the part of Harlequin. That certainly was a big load off our minds; but nobody seemed in the least inclined or willing to tackle Clown. Everybody was quite game to do Butcher, Baker, Tinker, Tailor, &c., or even Policeman, Swell, or Pantaloon, but all resolutely shied at the responsibility of Clown. At last, after a deal of persuasion and earnest asseverations on the part of everybody else that he was sent into the world for the sole aim and object of representing Clown in the way in which Clown ought to be represented, Archibald Stuart-Wortley undertook to do or die in the attempt to worthily "don the motley," which I believe is the correct phrase for playing Clown. That was all right. We got along swimmingly when once this crux was got over. Thomas Knox Holmes, a veteran of seventy-two years of age, but a boy at heart, was cast for Pantaloon. He had taken part in the Amateur Pantomime a quarter of a century earlier, in which John Hollingshead played. Your humble servant, who played under the rather patent pseudonym of W. "Wye," was cast for Policeman, Captain H. E. Colville (now Sir Henry Colville) for Sprite, and Mademoiselle Rosa, one of the *premières danseuses* of the Alhambra, for Columbine. Lord de Clifford was the Swell, with a very good high kick, and the rest of the characters in the Harlequinade were filled by those who had appeared as Thieves in the "opening."

Dear old Bob Soutar, who was at that time the stage-manager of the Gaiety Theatre, occupied the same post

for our benefit, and never did shepherd look more carefully after a flock of sheep than did Bob Soutar after our flock of wild amateurs. He was ubiquitous without being in the least obtrusive. Was there a trap to be worked, he was on the spot to see that none of us unwittingly fell into it; was there a leap to be taken, he was ready waiting to see that the stage hands told off to catch us were at their posts. In fact, he was here, there, and everywhere, and with that peculiar, quiet, methodical manner of his proved invaluable to everybody connected with the performance.

Never was practical John Hollingshead's perspicacity shown to greater advantage than when he selected John d'Auban for the onerous and responsible position of our Pantomime Instructor. Imagine the magnitude, the seeming impossibility of the task imposed upon him. The labours of Hercules were light in comparison to what was before him when he undertook to train and teach some five-and-thirty amateurs, who have always the reputation of being "kittle cattle" to drive. Not only had he to superintend every single detail of the "opening," to arrange every bit of "business," to teach every step of every dance, to drill a body of inexperienced gentlemen in marches, counter-marches, entrances, exits, to arrange movements to choruses, tableaux at the dénouements of scenes, and broadsword combats in the Thieves' Cave, but he also had to commence at the letter A of the alphabet of the Harlequinade with one and all of us, and go through to Z before trusting us with the grammar and language of the business, so to speak. He had to teach us individually and collectively "leaps," "rolls-out," "slaps," "bats," "fountains," "animations," and goodness knows what else, for my memory fails me

at this distance of time as to all the technical terms of which we were profoundly ignorant at the start, but which in an incredibly short space of time we used with the easy, flippant familiarity of "old timers" of at least a quarter of a century's experience.

Nor could he have possibly succeeded as he did in instilling success into us had we not one and all worked loyally, unflaggingly, and seriously. This he has admitted to me himself frequently since, and his despair at the immediate outset was speedily turned into delight at finding himself the instructor of what he has euphemistically termed the most intelligent batch of pupils he ever had under his tuition.

For our parts, we speedily recognised in him the most patient, painstaking, equable, and long-suffering mortal we had ever come across in any sphere of life. He knew *what* he wanted to be done, and *how* he wanted it to be done—and it was done.

I know as a fact that John d'Auban regards to this day his production of that Amateur Pantomime as not only one of the most successful achievements of his long and honourable career, but also as one of the most pleasant—if not the very pleasantest—of his countless associations with the stage. His sentiments on the point are most fully and unanimously reciprocated by us.

Another enormous advantage we enjoyed was the musical directorship of Herr Meyer Lutz, the deservedly popular "Magister" of the Gaiety Theatre. No one at that time, and few if any since, had greater experience of the class of work that had made the Gaiety, from its start, the very first favourite of London theatres that catered to the play-going public the lighter form of entertainment of the Metropolis.

Amateurs though we were, we were "safe as houses" under the stolid guidance of the "Magister." Serene, unruffled, patient—even dogged in his determination to obtain the result he wanted—he would sit hour after hour at the piano, seemingly oblivious of, and callous to, the excruciating discords that were the most striking features of the earlier chorus rehearsals, no sign or token of anything in the shape of disapprobation of our well-meant but rather abortive efforts at harmony apparent in his phlegmatic bearing, until at the conclusion of what we considered an especially well rendered number, he would laconically ejaculate, "Vunce more, pleess!" and not only "vunce more, pleess," but maybe fifty times, we had to hammer at it, until he was—for the time being—satisfied of, at all events, a semblance of improvement. He literally dinned into our ears sufficient of what did duty for harmony to enable him to know that his clever orchestration in the hands of the admirable Gaiety band would cover up our delinquencies. In justice to our good singers and accomplished musicians, such as Mr. Lionel Benson, Mr. Twiss, and others, I must state that the previous remarks are not intended to apply to them of course, but to the majority of us whose zeal as vocalists outran both their capabilities and their discretion.

Needless to say, the worthy Lutz discriminated with unerring certainty between the musical sheep and the inharmonious goats, and for the formers' sake, as well as for his own, wasted no unnecessary time in directing his energies elsewhere than where they were required. He did wonders with the goats, and their bleats by the day of performance passed muster well enough to be fairly indiscernible from those of the sheep—in *ensembles* and choruses at all events.

I must now go back to the time when the cast had been duly fixed upon, the scripts delivered, and stage rehearsals commenced. So far there had only been musical rehearsals, extending over some ten days or a fortnight, mostly from four to six of an afternoon. With only a month left before the day already advertised for the performance, we felt that rehearsing had to begin in earnest, and begin in earnest it did.

It is wonderful what a toil, not to say absolute hard labour, enthusiasts will make of a pleasure. *Exempli gratiâ*. We rehearsed that Pantomime for four weeks on end from three o'clock till six o'clock every afternoon, and from midnight till three o'clock in the morning, barring Saturdays and Sundays, on the Gaiety stage.

Apart from the regular "calls," we were rehearsing in one way or another all day long. You had only to go into the Beefsteak Club at any time after the doors were open and you would find "Odger" Colville, as we called him, Archie Stuart-Wortley, W. S. Gilbert, your humble servant, and others connected with the "show," practising harlequin leaps over the fire-screen on to the sofa, doing scraps of dances in the corners, and arranging details of proposed business over a hastily swallowed meal. I verily believe that we selfish, egotistical enthusiasts drove everybody else away from that Club during the entire month in which we suffered from the *cacoethes ludendi*, except a few good-natured souls who had not been included in the cast, but who became so fired with the infection of our enthusiasm, that they too must needs join in our exercises, to the additional detriment of the Club furniture and the disintegration of their articles of apparel.

At that period I was residing in chambers on the top floor of one of the Courts in the Temple, which chambers

I shared with Jos. Maclean. *After* our night rehearsals at the Gaiety we used to go home and practise dances, leaps, and all sorts of wild antics, until we received a mild protest from the occupant of the floor below, who, fortunately, was not only a personal friend, but also a real good fellow. He based his objection not so much upon his deprivation of sleep, as that was a matter easily remedied in the daytime whilst he was waiting in chambers for briefs that never came, but upon the ground that he went in perpetual fear of our coming through upon him below. He appeared to be just as much concerned on our account as his own, for he felt confident that, like himself, we were uninsured, and pointed out that a catastrophe of the nature he anticipated would prove to be absolutely unremunerative to anybody but the undertakers. There was no combating so completely unanswerable an argument as that, so we entered into a friendly arrangement with him, by which we agreed to swap rooms with him until after the production of the Pantomime, as the chambers below him again were non-residential.

One of the most interesting circumstances in connection with the enthusiasm that possessed us was the tremendous keenness of W. S. Gilbert. It seems that one of the hobbies of his life had been to play Harlequin, and with the thoroughness that is one of his most marked characteristics, he meant to do it well. It is hardly necessary to say that he played it extraordinarily well, but with a grim determinedness that amused many in the audience, although they one and all recognised with admiration the enormous trouble to which he must necessarily have put himself to arrive at the state of perfection he achieved. There is little if any question that Harlequin is the most difficult rôle to fill satisfactorily in a Harlequinade, and

that W. S. Gilbert should have acquitted himself so very much more than creditably in such an exacting task, especially for one who had passed the first bloom of youth, and had had no kind of preliminary training for such work, is absolutely marvellous. It was a triumph of mind over matter, of sheer will-power over physical obstacles. His keenness was not confined to personal practice, although he never missed an opportunity of going through the "animations," or pirouetting, or doing something to perfect himself, when in sufficient privacy or only in company of his fellow-workers. He on several occasions invited all of those immediately associated with him in the business of his Harlequinade to his private house to dinner, and we would all afterwards go two or three times through a thorough rehearsal in his drawing-room, and later on cab it down to the Gaiety to attend the regular midnight call. A pleasanter, more genial, or agreeable companion than he was it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to find.

Matters went merrily, briskly, and most satisfactorily on for the first fortnight of the month's stage-rehearsals, when lo! a bolt from the blue! an unforeseen calamity! a dire disaster! Archie Stuart-Wortley, who had scarcely been up to his wonted mark of vivacity for three or four days, was stricken with a bad attack of *measles*, of all things in the world. There was no help for it; he was obliged to relinquish all idea of appearing as Clown, or indeed of coming near us for some little time after he rose from his sick-bed. There was a nice dilemma! "Practical John" was consulted post-haste as to what was to be done. He decided the matter off-hand, to my own utter consternation and dismay, and to the astonishment, but at the same time the relief, of the others. His fiat went forth that I of all

people was to "don the motley." In vain I protested, pleaded, argued. The "ukase" had gone forth, and I was obliged to submit. Fortunately in my rôle of Policeman I was a good deal associated with the Clown, and as a matter of fact knew every bit of "business" through strict attention to it at rehearsals, whether it related directly to myself or not. Had it not been for that, I verily believe that "ukase" or no "ukase" I should have been summoned to the antipodes on important family business, and have "done a guy," which I understand to be more or less of a slang phrase for "showing the white feather." Any way, I undertook the awful responsibility of Clown, and I am creditably informed that I got through all right. To this day I am of the firm belief that for Clown—even an amateur Clown—to attempt to sing both "Hot Codlings" and "Tippetywicket" was a great mistake. I thought so then, but I did as I was told, and they (meaning the audience) did not throw bricks or anything else at me. And so I was satisfied, if they were not.

Of course my assumption of Clown necessitated a further change in the arrangements of the cast of the Harlequinade. "Practical John" settled it all without an effort. Cut out the Sprite, who wasn't wanted, and let Captain Colvile do the Policeman. It was done with the very happiest results. "Odger" Colvile's Policeman was one of the most pronounced features of the Pantomime, and his wrestle with the Tailor's dummy has seldom been equalled, and certainly never excelled, as a pure piece of absolutely first-class pantomime work in the very highest sense of the term.

I had no idea of what I undertook when I obeyed that "ukase" and became Clown. To show what I went through in the way of physical exercise, I solemnly aver

that during that fortnight in which I had to rehearse for all I was worth, I lost over *two stone* in weight, and covered myself from head to heels with bruises to such an extent, that after each rehearsal I had to retire to a dressing-room, strip to the buff, and be rubbed all over most vigorously with a marvellous compound known in the profession as "nine-oils" by no less than three stage-hands for fifteen or twenty minutes.

These little trifles were part of the "fun" we entered upon in our craving for pantomimic glory!

Happily Archie Stuart-Wortley recovered from the measles in time to attend sufficient rehearsals to get in some excellent work as The Trumpeter of "The Forty Thieves," as I have mentioned before. For a variety of reasons, which it is obviously unnecessary to detail, I should infinitely have preferred to see him as Clown.

Long before the eventful day arrived every available seat in the Gaiety Theatre had been bought up at very greatly enhanced prices, the lowest price being half-a-crown for the gallery. As much as fifty guineas apiece was given for more than one private box. H.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales not only gave a very handsome sum for the Royal box, but honoured the performance with their presence and that of the members of their family.

Fancy prices ruled for the stalls, two guineas being the lowest for that coign of vantage; whilst nothing less than a guinea was accepted for dress-circle seats; and the charge in the pit, where the seats were all reserved, was half-a-guinea. The total receipts for the first performance on the afternoon of Wednesday, February 13th, amounted to between six and seven hundred pounds. It was originally intended that there should be only one performance, but the success that attended that performance was

so great that Practical John Hollingshead arranged for a special performance at Brighton on the evening of Saturday, March 9th. Here the performance was equally successful, and the receipts — at, of course, enhanced prices — the largest ever taken at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, except for Grand Opera. We went down in a body to Brighton, and took the whole of the Old Ship Hotel, and a royal good time we had of it. Our lady thieves at Brighton were recruited from the Theatre Royal.

Shortly after this the terrible disaster of the loss of the training-ship *Eurydice*, off the Isle of Wight, occurred, and as a fund was started for the bereaved relatives of the men and lads who were lost in such an awful manner, it was determined to give yet another performance at the Gaiety Theatre for the benefit of the *Eurydice* Fund. This took place on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 10, 1878, and proved in every way as successful as the two previous performances, although the receipts were not so large as on the occasion of the first performance, owing to the prices in the cheaper parts of the house being reduced to a lower scale. Without having the actual figures, I believe I am correct in stating that the receipts of the three performances amounted to upwards of £1500, of which £500 was handed over to the Theatrical Fund, £300 or £400 to the *Eurydice* Fund, and handsome sums to two or three London hospitals and the Brighton Hospital, so that the Ambitious Amateurs, if they did nothing else, proved of some assistance to charities.

I have made no attempt to give any extracts of accounts of the Pantomime, but I append two poetical effusions that appeared at the time. I forget at the moment in what paper the first of the two following

appeared. The first of them was written by Mr. J. E. C. Mathews, a member of the Beefsteak Club, with a very happy and facile knack of light versification. Here it is :—

AMATEUR PANTOMIME, 1878.

“THE FORTY THIEVES.”

I.

Walk up ! ye Church and Laity,
Take places at the Gaiety,
Don't hesitate for fear you're late
And full you find each row ;
For all the World is coming here
To criticise our mumming here,
Our Metaphoric, Allegoric, Pantomimic Show !
Ensure our popularity,
We claim without vulgarity,
In worthy cause of charity
We work to entertain.
On the rising of the curtain
Of succeeding we are certain
If you greet us when you meet us
In a sympathetic vein.
So come and see our play,
No matter what you pay ;
A show like this
You mustn't miss,
For it's only on to-day.

II.

Mark our play ! Four authors wrote it,
Quaintly quoted, justly noted
For the talents they've devoted
To delineating men.
“Happy thoughts” by one invented ;
Novel jokes unprecedented
Make “Our boys” well represented
By the brisk Byronic pen.
Then our “Thieves” are all enlisted
From the Beefsteak Club,—assisted
By some Ladies, who are Haidées
When they're acting on “the Square.”

AMATEUR ACTING

Though devoid of family jars, sir,
 We've our prisoner at the Bar, sir,
 For the convict Benson has obtained
 Permission to be there.¹

III.

Ali Baba's an ex-Lancer,
 Hassarac's a clinking dancer,
 Who can make you double shuffles and
 Quaint saltatory curves.
 We've a Ganem whose grimaces
 Ever *gain him* at all places
 The plaudits which his feature *Twis-ting*
 Faculty deserves.
 Then we've fascinating Lydia,
 Who's gayer grown, and giddier,
 I'll wager half-a-quid yer
 Never saw a sweeter soul !
 We've alluring little Lucy,
 Whom you'll worship when you *do* see ;
 And Helen, always tellin'
 When she plays the Major rôle.

IV.

We've a Harlequin reputed
 For the works he's executed,
 And on few men has acumen
 Been more liberally poured.
 When he dances dressed in spangles
 Through the hornpipe's tricky tangles,
 You'll find, though still "in statu pupillari,"
 He's encored.
 His dumb motions are perfection
 When taken in connection
 With "gradations," "animations,"
 And "technicals" like that :
 Though our wily Willie Gilbert
 Doesn't care a single filbert
 Except to flirt with Columbine
 And wave his magic bat.

¹ This refers to the circumstance that Mr. W. Higgins, as one of the thieves, made up as Benson, a notorious convict of that period.

V.

Our Clown's a first-class cricketer,
 Whose tricks could scarce be *wicketer*;
 Yet Yardley we can hardly
 Blame for "blaming" Pantaloon,
 Who in "Fielding" days was famous
 When he played the same old game as
 We shall see him, if we're lucky,
 Re-enact this afternoon.
 We've amongst our "corps" dramatic
 A Policeman acrobatic
 Who'll "take a slap," fly through a trap,
 Or stand upon his head;
 We've the King of "can-can" dancers,
 Got at great expense from France, sirs;
 Whilst our Artist blows his trumpet,
 As his trumpeter is dead.

VI.

We've a wonderful Cartoonist,
 Who can dash you off the soonest
 In shade and light of black and white,
 Unfinished or Vandyked;
 In two minutes he will sketch you
 Either Beaconsfield (who'll fetch you)
 Or the people's William, who they say
 Has got himself disliked.
 In short, our Exhibition
 Simply laughs at Competition,
 Such amusements as inducements
 Cannot fail to fill our Show;
 Yet from the first we've said it,
 We must give the mead of credit
 To D'Auban, Lutz, and Hollingshead,
 Who've taught us what we know.
 So come and see our play,
 No matter what you pay,
 A show like this
 You mustn't miss,
 For it's only on to-day.

J. C. MATHEWS.

The following lines appeared in a periodical of the time called *Mirth*, edited, to the best of my recollection, by Henry J. Byron, who I rather suspect was the author of the subjoined lucubration, which was signed "B." :—

"THE AMATEUR PANTOMIME AT THE GAIETY."

Go call me a hansom, and see that the horse
Seems to look on his fate as a matter of course ;
Is prepared to fly over the ground at a rate
Dealing danger to children,—for, hang it, it's late !
The time is announced when the play's to begin,
And unpunctuality seems like a sin
On such an important occasion as this—
And none of the Amateurs' fooling I'd miss.

Thus we cried on the thirteenth of *Februa^{ree}*
In metre suggestive of "Bonnie Dundee" ;
And shortly the hansom drove up to the door
Of Hollingshead's playhouse, ten minutes before
The curtain should rise on the comical piece
By Gilbert, Burnand, H. J. Byron, and Reece.
What a sight was the "house" ! What a buzz and a hum,
And the overture starts off with "Old Mother Gumm "

Or something as classical,—never mind what :
The curtain goes up, and soon there's a big shot
That brings down the "house" in the opening scene,
The wonderful dancing of "Wye" and Maclean.
There are two *rivers* Wye, as we all of us know,
But such two dancers "Wye," why the world cannot show ;
Between him and Maclean there was scarcely a choice,
For the latter was almost as nimble as Royce.

Then Gooch shone as "Ali," and spoke out so bold ;
And Quintin as "Ganem" had got a slight cold,
But looked very funny ; whilst Archibald Wortley
Exhibited antics so twisty and twirtley
In boots fitting tightly as patent Balmorals
That Frederick Vokes had best look to his laurels ;
Whilst one thief made up as notorious Kerr,
And another as Gladstone, ex-Prime Mini-ster.

Miss Barry,—"*Abdallah*,"—wore trousers which *we*
Think were p'r'aps just a trifle unnecessaree,
But still she looked splendid ; and "*Cogia*" was played
By blooming Miss Bufton, most grandly arrayed ;
She made a slight character seem quite important ;—
But there,—get away,—for the long and the short on't
Is this,—that the nonsense was kept in a glow
By dear Lydia Thompson,—the best in the show.

She danced and she sang, and delivered her words
 Like the lightest and brightest of musical birds,
 And whenever the scene threatened flagging, why she
 Came and put it all right in a single *jiffée*.

But when Lucy Buckstone, the sweetest of fays
 Came, and, using old-world pantomimical phrase,
 Called on Harlequin, Clown, Columbine, Pantaloon,
 And the band struck up gaily a Pantomime tune,

There was laughing and cheering, and shouts of surprise,
 As Gilbert in glittering garb met our eyes—

When the old "animations" he showed well he knew,
 A thrill of astonishment ran the house through.

Then, after the Columbine, dainty as lace,

The shaky artistical Knox took his place

As senile Pantaloon ; then with comical cry,

And a "head over heels," came the Clown, Mr. "Wye."

There were leaps, fun in heaps, Captain Colville was good,

And acted as no "Peeler" would, could, or should ;

Lord de Clifford as "Swell" was no end of a toff,

And was quite unconcerned when his "jasey" dropped off.

M'Calmont, young Ward, each elicited roars ;

And Bastard the loudest of all the encores ;

And Gilbert through all danced and postured with grace,

With a very determined expression of face.

The thanks of all those who were present that day

Are certainly due to the brilliant array

Of good-nature, and talent, and last, though not least,

To John Hollingshead, founder, no doubt, of the feast ;

To Lutz, of conductors the best ever known ;

To d'Auban, who patience and talent has shown ;

Coaching all with a temper that nothing could vex,

And to genial Bob Soutar—God bless his old specs !

B.

Although I have been mainly dependent upon my own memory for the facts stated above, I believe the record of the proceedings in connection with the inception and carrying out of the Amateur Pantomime of 1878 to be substantially accurate in every particular. There may be some minor details which I have omitted, but if so, it is just as well, for I have far exceeded the space I had intended to occupy, and which I thought at the outset would be sufficient.

THE AMATEUR BURLESQUE OF 1881.

"HERNE THE HUNTED."

PLAYED at the Gaiety Theatre on the afternoons of
Tuesday, 24th May, and Friday, 27th May, 1881.

HERNE THE HUNTED!

PANTOMIMIC BURLESQUE

BY

R. REECE and W. YARDLEY.

CHARACTERS.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Henry the Eighth | (<i>King of England</i>) | Captain A. GOOCH. |
| The Duke of Richmond | (<i>His Son</i>) | Mr. C. G. ALLAN. |
| The Earl of Surrey | | Mr. C. C. CLARK. |
| Sir Thomas Wyat | | Mr. A. STUART-WORTLEY. |
| The Duke of Norfolk | | Mr. J. H. MORGAN. |
| The Duke of Suffolk | | Mr. J. H. GIFFORD. |
| The Earl of Oxford | (<i>The Lord Chamberlain</i>) | Mr. J. ASHBY-STERRY. |
| Le Duc de Chasse- au-Reynard | (<i>The French Ambassador</i>) | Mr. A. BASTARD. |
| Captain Bouchier | (<i>Captain of the Guard</i>) | M. H. ST. PAUL. |
| Will Sommers | (<i>The King's Jester</i>) | Mr. JOS. J. MACLEAN. |
| Simon Quanden | (<i>Head Cook at Windsor Castle</i>) | Mr. C. W. TROLLOPE. |
| Tristram Lyndwood | (<i>Ex-keeper of the Forest</i>) | Mr. T. KNOX-HOLMES. |
| Herne | (<i>The Demon Hunter</i>) | Mr. W. YARDLEY. |
| The "Duke of Shoreditch" | (Non-Commis- sioned Officers of the Yeomen of the Guard) | Mr. A. B. COOK. |
| The "Marquis of Islington" | | Mr. E. NORTHCOTE. |
| The "Marquis of Padding- ton" | | Mr. GODFREY PEARSE. |
| Huntsman | | Mr. S. DUBOURG. |
| First Whip | | Mr. FRANK MILES. |
| Second Whip | | Mr. LESLIE WARD. |
| The Fox | | Captain BARRINGTON-FOOTE, R.A. |
| Anne Boleyn | | Miss FORTESCUE. |
| Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald | (Known as " <i>The Fair Geraldine</i> ") | Mrs. LIVINGSTONE THOMPSON. |
| Mabel Lyndwood | | Mrs. CECIL CLAY. (Miss ROSINA VOKES.) |

Yeomen of the Guard, Cooks, Scullions, Hounds, Peasants, &c.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—“Terrace and Battlements of Windsor Castle by night.”

SCENE 2.—“The Kitchen in Windsor Castle.”

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—“A State Apartment in Windsor Castle.”

SCENE 2.—“A Glade in Windsor Forest.”

SCENE 3.—“Herne's Oak in Windsor Forest.”

The remarkable success that attended the Amateur Pantomime of 1878 fired the majority of us who had taken part in that performance to another effort in the same line three years later.

It was unanimously felt that another Amateur Pantomime, after such a short lapse of time, would be out of the question, for a variety of more or less obvious reasons.

After a vast deal of careful deliberation, in consultation of course with our grand ally, our “guide, philosopher, and friend,” “Practical John” Hollingshead, it was determined to try our still ‘prentice hands on “Burlesque.” All sorts of old-time and well-tried burlesques were suggested, but there seemed to be a general consensus of opinion that the entire affair should be as far as possible original.

Naturally the first person to whom we turned to provide us with a “book,” and to assist us also in the rendering of his own work, was Mr. W. S. Gilbert, who had been such a marked feature in the success of the Pantomime in his dual capacity of part-author and one of the leading performers.

At this distance of time, and writing purely from memory, I believe I am correct in stating that the principal reasons why this highly desirable desideratum failed

to become a *fait accompli* were, that Mr. Gilbert had made all arrangements for a prolonged trip abroad. Anyway, the fact remains that he was unable to assist us in any capacity, to the general disappointment of all.

On reflection in maturer years, it seems difficult to realise *now* how we could have had what the Americans term the "gall" to approach W. S. Gilbert, who was then in the zenith of his success with his immortal "Savoy" comic operas, with such a suggestion as to gratuitously provide us with an original burlesque from his pen. I only wonder that we did not also approach Sir Arthur (then Mr.) Sullivan to write original music for us. Perhaps we did. I am sure we must have attempted once more to trespass upon the proverbial good-nature of Mr. F. C. Burnand, and also on that of Mr. Henry J. Byron, if he was then still alive, they being two of the contributors to the Amateur Pantomime "book."

Mr. Robert Reece, who, with Mr. Gilbert, made up the quartette of librettists of the Amateur Pantomime, would not undertake to write our proposed Amateur Burlesque single-handed, and to cut matters short, I had the temerity to accept the honour which was offered to me of collaborating with him.

The subject eventually selected was a very "go-as-you-please" travestie, based upon Harrison Ainsworth's "Windsor Castle," which we took the liberty of calling "Herne the Hunted."

Of course it is not for me to descant upon the merits or demerits of the piece such as it was, but I have held it as a matter of pride—a feeling that I know was shared by poor old "Bob" Reece—that we succeeded, in a two-act burlesque of about one thousand lines, in providing no less than twenty speaking parts, all of more

or less prominence, the large majority of them being of "more" than of "less."

We had a cast of amateur "stars," every one of whom had a good chance of distinguishing themselves, and not one of whom failed to do so; whilst one and all pulled together with an utter absence of jealousy, but with the *bonne camaraderie* which is *the* essential of success in such circumstances. We had the inestimable advantage of the assistance not only of our trusty manager, John Hollingshead, but also of the invaluable trio, Robert Soutar (stage-manager), Herr Meyer Lutz (musical conductor), and John d'Auban (pantomime and general instructor), who had done such wonders for us in the Amateur Pantomime, and in whom we had the completest confidence, whilst they from their previous experience of us as workers had a vast deal more confidence in us than they naturally possessed when they started upon their extremely difficult task three years previously.

Any attempt to eulogise their good work in "Herne the Hunted" would be a mere repetition of what I have already written of it in connection with the Amateur Pantomime. Such a curt dismissal of their splendid services in the Burlesque must therefore be taken, as it is intended, as a compliment, and not as any depreciation of their enormous value to ourselves.

How it came about precisely I do not now remember, if indeed I ever rightly knew; but the fact remains that we decided to endeavour to employ amateur talent only throughout the cast, ladies and all.

I am certain that it was not that we failed in any way to appreciate the splendid assistance that the professional ladies had rendered us in the Amateur Pantomime.

I am bound to say that our consciences as to the

strict meaning of the term "amateur" were distinctly elastic, for we naturally hailed with the greatest delight the fact that we could obtain the absolutely invaluable services of Mrs. Cecil Clay, who upon her marriage had retired from the professional stage, which she had so brilliantly illuminated with her unique talents as Miss Rosina Vokes, the soul of the famous and talented Vokes Family.

A retired professional, even the star of stars in the line in which her lot had been cast, was by us considered an amateur for our own ends. These ends, however, could scarcely be considered selfish, as they were directed to the gratification of the public, who were always her adorers, at the unexpected opportunity of seeing her once again, when they had resigned themselves to the regret that they had seen the last of her upon the stage.

Again, with such an ally in our ranks we had success for the charity for which we had to perform, viz., "The Artists' Benevolent Institution," positively assured.

Why, then, should our consciences, if we were possessed of such inconvenient commodities, have been otherwise than elastic?

I take this opportunity of relating a circumstance which escaped me when writing about the Amateur Pantomime, but which is quite as apropos to notice here, since it relates to Mrs. Cecil Clay, and is illustrative of the humour that was the essence of her being. Our worthy friend, "Practical John" Hollingshead, wrote to her before anybody else to ask her to play the leading girl in the Pantomime. He received in reply a highly characteristic letter, to the effect that nothing would have given her greater pleasure than to comply with his request, were it not that grave domestic reasons prevented

her from doing so. "But," she added, "should you require a baby for the comic scenes in the Harlequinade, I have every reason to hope and believe that by the time its services would be needed, I shall be in a position to supply you with the article."

There was no idea in her mind at the time of her appearance in "Herne the Hunted" that she would later re-adopt the theatrical profession, as she did with notable success, but alas! only on the American continent, and only for too brief a period, as she practically "died in harness," the idol of all who were privileged to know her, either as an actress or as a woman, at an early age, and in the very zenith of her fame as a comedy actress of the most pronounced talents. She instituted a style of entertainment absolutely unique in its perfection, and of a style that has had many would-be imitators, but which remains in the memories of all who were fortunate enough to become acquainted with it as being as unapproachable as irreproachable.

I have often thought that America was perhaps indirectly indebted to "Herne the Hunted" for the pleasure her theatre-going public derived from the return of Rosina Vokes to the stage.

With such a "star" to interpret our humble efforts, Robert Reece and I were naturally only too eager to make the character of Mabel Lyndwood the centre round which the rest revolved; but Mrs. Cecil Clay would not hear of any such arrangement, and positively declined to accept a rôle of anything like undue prominence. I find on consulting the "book" of "Herne the Hunted" that her actual number of speaking lines did not exceed *sixty*.

To her performance of Mabel Lyndwood in

"Herne the Hunted" I could not find terms to do sufficient justice, nor even if I could have I a tithe of the space available to do so. From her entrance in the Kitchen Scene (Scene 2 of Act. I.), when she was accorded as magnificent a reception as I ever witnessed or heard, to the final fall of the curtain, she was the life and soul of the performance.

Tristram Lyndwood, Mabel's grandfather, played by the veteran Thomas Knox-Holmes in his seventy-fifth year, calls off to her—

TRISTRAM. Mabel!

Enter MABEL LYNDWOOD.

MABEL (*shyly*). Oh my! my footsteps I'll retrace;
I'm not accustomed to this sort of place.

ALL. Don't go.

[*About to go.*]

MABEL. Oh dear! I must: in public my
Want of experience makes me so shy.

HERNE. It is a source of grief to friends admiring,
Whose name is Legion, that you're *too* retiring.

The arch humour with which she gave her first lines, the irresistible fascination of that wonderfully infectious laugh of hers, produced an electrical effect upon the audience. Admirably as the piece had commenced in the first scene, started with enormous *éclat* by a most effective trio to the then popular air, "I'm Living with Mother now," rendered inimitably by Messrs. E. Northcote, A. B. Cook, and Godfrey Pearse, as the Marquis of Islington, the Duke of Shoreditch, and the Marquis of Paddington, all possibilities of non-success were dispelled by our "Mabel." Her dancing was as light, as graceful, as perfect, as in the very heyday of her most triumphant successes. Her "business" was Rosina Vokes at her

very best. Nothing was ever seen in the way of true pantomimic art better than her tremendous fight for mastery between herself and her (hobby-)horse in the Hunting Scene in the last Act, culminating in the complete subjugation of the "fiery, untamed steed," a *tour de force* which obtained her a double recall.

It was not only in her individual performance that she was of such inestimable value, but also in the unflagging devotion to the success of the rest of us, one and all. She was the first to arrive at rehearsal, the last to leave, and I believe I am not overstating facts in the least in asserting that there was not an individual connected with the performance who did not benefit very largely by her direct as well as indirect influence. We were as a body infected by the zeal and keenness she displayed and the example she set us, and as individuals we profited vastly by the quiet hints she gave us, which hints were conveyed with such tact and skill as to blind us to the fact that each and every one of them was as a matter of fact a lesson. Hints are easily, and often greedily, taken. Lessons are generally unpalatable. We never discovered the difference between them, administered as they were with such a delightful sugar-coating.

It must not be imagined that we found it by any means an easy job to enlist the services of amateur ladies, especially in the matter of the chorus. Here again Mrs. Cecil Clay was of infinite value to us. Mainly through her persuasive faculties, and by undertaking the responsibilities of "chaperonage," she induced a number of stern and (at first) horrified "mammies" to allow their daughters to appear for the first time in public (in a *real* theatre at all events) in the cause of charity.

That "charity" is a wonderful word with which to

conjure, provided your "conjurer" or "conjuress" is an adept at the art.

Our "conjuress" secured us a bevy of most charming young ladies, whose excellent services demand far more recognition than I can give them; for although I have hunted London high and low, and have appealed to everybody I can think of, I have been unable to find a single soul from whom I can obtain a programme of the performances.

The cast I have given at the commencement of this article is taken from a printed book of the Burlesque. And at that *impasse* I fear I must leave in most ungallant fashion the kind ladies who formed our chorus, all beautiful and talented, but destined, so far as my mission is concerned, to be unrecorded, though far from unrecognised, except by name.

It is an interesting matter to me, and I think to all who may peruse these lines, that had it not been that she had just determined to take to the stage as a profession, Mrs. Langtry would have been in our cast. She would naturally have proved a great attraction, and it was a moot point with her for some days as to whether a first introduction to the public on the stage in a "big" amateur "function" would prove beneficial or prejudicial to her future prospects as a professional actress. She ultimately decided not to appear as an amateur—to our distinct loss goes without the saying.

We secured a decided acquisition in Mrs. Livingstone Thompson, another of the "Society Beauties" of the day, as The Fair Geraldine, and the performance of the character was no less charming and engaging than her appearance.

Our great stumbling-block proved to be our Anne

Boleyn. Mrs. Godfrey Pearse, the daughter of Mario and Grisi, and inheriting a far more exceptional endowment of their divine vocal qualities than is, as a rule, bestowed by heredity on the progeny of mated talent, whilst at the same time of exceptional attractiveness in face and form, had consented to honour us with her valuable aid. Unfortunately she was incapacitated by an affection of her throat, happily of only temporary duration, from assisting us.

Hers was the commencement of a series of disappointments on the part of several ladies of marked vocal and personal attainments, until Captain Arthur Gooch, our Henry Eighth, began to think that there was a fatality attaching to the character not unconnected with history, in so far that he was obliged to change his Queen so frequently. I believe it is an actual fact that when we finally found our Anne in Miss Fortescue, who had then recently joined Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Savoy Company, she was actually the *sixth* with whom Gooch had rehearsed. Needless to say Miss Fortescue proved in every respect a most efficient and attractive Anne Boleyn.

I doubt if it would have been possible to find anybody, professional or otherwise, who could personify Bluff King Hal so much in accordance to tradition as did our estimable colleague, "Goochy." His "make-up" was no caricature; the burlesque came out of his own unctuous and humorous rendering of the opportunities afforded him. One of the biggest hits of the piece was his mock Italian "duettino" with Anne Boleyn to Campana's "Dimmi che m'ami."

An amateur, who has since turned professional, and who is one of the soundest and most useful of our actors of to-day, was Mr. C. G. Allan, who played with keen enjoy-

ment and appreciative humour the part of the Duke of Richmond. Mr. Charles Carlos Clarke, one of the best known, and consequently most popular, members of the Stock Exchange then and now, was delightful in his æstheticism as the Earl of Surrey. Both his banjo-playing and his nimble dancing were highly prominent amongst the most successful features of the Burlesque, and his duet, "Marigold," with Mrs. Livingstone Thompson, made a most pronounced hit. Mr. Joseph J. Maclean, who played Will Sommers, the King's Jester, underwent a most cruel experience. On the very morning of the first performance he had the very sad misfortune to lose his father, to whom he was most devotedly attached. Loyal to the core, knowing that in the event of his non-appearance in one of the most important parts in the piece it would either mean the abandonment of the performance or the necessity of a public explanation, which could not fail to throw a gloom over not only the company, but the audience also and the unsatisfactory necessity of a substitute reading the part at the eleventh hour, he went through his terrible ordeal like the veritable hero he proved himself to be.

He has seldom been seen to greater advantage, although an amateur actor of very wide experience and exceptional skill. He abandoned himself to the excitement of the afternoon with most conspicuous *verve*, and contributed in a marked degree to the success of the entertainment. The reaction at the close, when the enormous tension on his nerve power was once relaxed, was the most pitiable experience that has ever fallen to my lot, for it was to me, the most intimate friend he possessed amongst the circle of intimate friends with whom he was associated on the occasion, that he confided

his terrible bereavement. It was an experience that must perforce dwell ever in my mind as long as I live.

There are innumerable well-authenticated cases of a similar nature in the profession, but such an occurrence amongst amateurs "playing at the real game" is, I should imagine, unique, and in all human probability will remain so.

On the Friday following his part was played with surprising success, especially considering the brevity of the interval, by Mr. Seymour Dubourg, who played the Huntsman in "Herne the Hunted." Mr. Seymour Dubourg was the son of Mr. A. W. Dubourg, part-author of "New Men and Old Acres," and author of other successful dramatic works.

Minor parts were admirably filled by Messrs. J. H. Morgan, J. H. Giffard, H. St. Paul, Frank Miles, and Leslie Ward, the two latter being distinguished members of the craft of artists, to whose Benevolent Institution the substantial profits of the performance were handed over.

Mr. C. W. Trollope, who was then one of the soundest amateur actors I have ever seen, and who for several years past has officiated in the capacity of stage-manager to the Canterbury "Old Stagers," endowed the comparatively minor rôle of Simon Quanden, Head Cook at Windsor Castle, with far more importance than the authors of the Burlesque had believed to exist in it.

A really admirable bit of *genre* burlesque—if I may be allowed to use such a term on such a subject—was the Fox of Captain Barrington Foote, R.A. It was worthy of a Charles Lauri, and I don't know how I could give it greater commendation.

Quite one of the happiest hits, rivalling, if not overshadowing, the success of his "can-can" in the Amateur Pantomime Harlequinade, was Mr. Algernon Bastard's

performance of Le Duc de Chasse-au-Reynard, the French Ambassador. Especially happy was he in the Hunting Scene, mounted in the first instance on a hobby-horse, and got up in true burlesque French hunting accoutrements, a large horn slung round his body, and a (Lowther Arcade) gun slung at his back.

Where he shone most conspicuously was in his encounter with the Fox, which to me was one of the funniest scenes ever witnessed in burlesque. It is indescribable; but the scene itself may convey some sort of idea of its possibilities, which were carried out to the fullest, both by Mr. Bastard and Captain Barrington Foote. The brevity of the quotation from the libretto must be the excuse for giving it:—

Horn without, very faint and plaintive.

Enter CHASSE-AU-REYNARD, on foot.

Reynard. Hello!—Personne!—I tink I lose my vay!

I mount,—I fall,—mount,—fall,—tousjours tombé!

Wis so much *mountin'* I am now quite *ill*!

My 'orse he frisk,—or I vas wis 'im still!

Enfin! I meet a hedge!—I try 'im!—Peste!

My 'orse go on alone!—J'y suis!—J'y reste!

I call to 'im to stay!—No use, of course!

I call so loud, myself am now ze 'orse!

I fall so often I am all a sore!

N'importe! Who care? Vive la chasse! Vive le sport!

[The fox comes in dead-beat and sits, not seeing CHASSE-AU-REYNARD.]

Ah! Qu'est que c'est que ça?—Vraiment le fox!

Bonne chance!—I shoot 'im dead like vun o'clocks!

[Prepares to shoot fox, who moves slowly up stage.]

Ah! quel dommage! He move!—All right, he stay!

[He stalks fox on his stomach, takes careful and deliberate aim, using rest for his gun. He fires. Percussion-cap goes off, which completely staggers him, throwing him over in the air on to his back. After a bit he pulls himself together again.]

Quelle cannonade !

[Addressing fox, who has died a most spasmodic and acrobatic death.

Are you kill? *[Examining him.*

Oui ! Tu es !

[In a rapture of delight.

Eep ! eep ! 'ooray !—Victoire !—Vive la belle France !

[Very proudly, with foot on fox's prostrate body.

Moi-même j'ai vengé Vaterloo !—*d'avance !*

[With considerable difficulty slings fox's body over his shoulder, and exit triumphantly.

This may not be particularly, if at all, funny to read, but the way the scene was played by Messrs. Bastard and Foote, was excruciatingly humorous, as any one who saw it will bear out.

One of the most satisfactory features of this performance to ourselves, and certainly to the audience, was the unqualified success of Mr. Archibald Stuart-Wortley as Sir Thomas Wyat. The bitter disappointment that befell him over the Amateur Pantomime, through being rendered *hors de combat* by measles, and having to relinquish the part of Clown, which he had assiduously rehearsed for two or three weeks, was amply atoned for by the triumph he achieved in "Herne the Hunted." A born comedian, he made capital out of every line he had to speak and every bit of "business" that came in his way. His pantomime, assisted by the "hints" (to which previous allusion has been made) of Mrs. Cecil Clay, was of the highest order. His singing, so quiet, so easy, and unforced, was a treat, especially in a parody of Tosti's "Ohé Mama !" His agility and athleticism were the perfection of untutored grace. He went through every trap and leap in or on the Gaiety stage as if he had been at the business all his life. Last, but not least, the freedom of movement he displayed in his dancing was a revelation, especially in an

amateur, and obtained for him from the Press favourable comparison with the prince of easy dancers, Fred Vokes.

The dancing throughout was especially good. Some of it was eccentric, notably in the case of Mr. Ashby Sterry, who when called upon at rehearsal to show what he could do in that line, admitted that he had never been a votary of Terpsichore, even in the humblest capacity. Dear old Ashby Sterry was obliged to be poetical even in such (to him) prosaic circumstances. Johnnie d'Auban professed not to understand his meaning, and requested an exhibit of his saltatory skill. The result of Sterry's maiden effort at the shrine of one of the Muses he had never dreamt previously of worshipping was simply paralyzing. As long as Lutz had strength to play the piano, Ashby Sterry found breath enough to perpetrate the wildest, most eccentric, and vigorous contortions and evolutions conceivable. They would have filled any dancing dervish with the greenest envy. At the conclusion of his trial trip d'Auban, when he had sufficiently recovered from amazement and exhaustion superinduced by uncontrollable laughter, simply remarked, "I can teach you nothing, sir, in the way of dancing. If you can do anything in any way approaching that in the performance, you will make the hit of the show."

And, upon my word, I believe he did. It certainly was like nothing ever seen before or since.

H.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales were again in evidence, and as usual were most generous in applause.

A third performance was given on a Saturday night at what then was known as the "Imperial Theatre" at the Westminster Aquarium.

Nobody seems, as far as I can gather, to have been inspired to write verses about the Amateur Burlesque.

Eh? Herne himself? What about him? I have no recollection of him beyond the fact that I tried my best to impersonate him, whether successfully or otherwise is not for me to say, even if I remembered, which I do not.

VII

THE GREEK PLAY, CAMBRIDGE

By J. W. CLARK

IN the summer term of 1880 some enterprising Oxford undergraduates persuaded Dr. Jowett to allow them to represent the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus in the Hall of Balliol College. Their effort not only achieved an immediate and splendid success, but entailed consequences of which the most enthusiastic member of that company never dreamt. For some five hundred years Greek plays had been read, and commented upon, and imitated ; but nobody had ever thought of acting one. The experiment made at Oxford showed that these ancient works could still be effective on the stage ; and in the eighteen years that have elapsed since then, Greek plays have been acted in America and in England with a popularity which shows hardly any signs of waxing cold.

In the following year the "Œdipus Tyrannus" was given at Harvard, but still our Cambridge gave no hint of following these two examples. At last, in the middle of May 1882, the subject came up accidentally in the course of conversation after a dinner at my house. There were present Dr. Waldstein and Mr. H. F. Wilson, then enjoying a brief repose after taking his degree. I cannot now remember how the talk began, but before long we had got as far as to determine to act a Greek play. A

copy of the "Poetæ Scenici," that useful collection of all the Greek plays that have come down to us, was fetched, and our search began. We put Æschylus out of court at once, because it was felt that his masterpiece had been given already, and we passed on to Sophocles. I began to read the titles of his plays, which are arranged alphabetically. "Ajax," I read. "Jim Stephen," cried Wilson. "Of course," shouted Waldstein. The matter was settled. I should explain that by "Jim Stephen" we meant J. K. Stephen, scholar of King's College, who was then giving brilliant promise of a successful career, cut short, alas! a few years afterwards by a lingering illness and an untimely death. His splendid physique pointed him out as an almost ideal Ajax, and the result fully justified our selection.

The term was half over, and if we were to add our play to the attractions of the "May week," there was not a moment to lose. The sanction of the Vice-Chancellor was easily obtained, and next, as a matter of precaution, "a meeting of those interested in the scheme" was summoned for Wednesday, 24th May. Our real object in calling this meeting was pecuniary; none of us had any money to risk or to lose, and we thought it prudent to find out, if possible, what support we were likely to get in the University.

The attendance at that meeting could not be described as large, but it was influential; and Dr. Kennedy, Regius Professor of Greek, supported us with generous enthusiasm; but he, and all the others present, counselled delay. In fact, looking back on our aspirations at that now distant period, it seems almost incredible that we could have thought of getting up a Greek play, music and all, in less than three weeks! So it was agreed to act in

the following October term, a committee was appointed, and we separated.

The first act of this body—I may say the only act—was to place the coming representation under the care of Dr. Waldstein, who threw himself into his new duties with infinite zeal and energy. His object was twofold ; first, to have the play thoroughly well acted ; and, secondly, to bring into it all the archæological correctness possible—no easy task when the different conditions under which the Greeks worked are taken into account. The Cambridge theatre of 1882 was an oblong structure of wood, with a stage at one end and a gallery at the other, while the stalls occupied the interval. It was easy to sneer at this building and call it a barn, but it lent itself admirably to the ingenious devices by which Dr. Waldstein turned its wooden planks into the semblance of marble. The modern proscenium was easily disguised by a wooden framework painted to represent a pediment resting on columns, delicately tinted with colour, and heightened with gold ; and the removal of a few rows of stalls gave space for a chorus-platform on a lower level than the stage, but about two feet above that of the auditorium, with an altar of Dionysus, heaped with fruit and flowers, in the centre.

For the presentation of the play we had but little to guide us. It is a received tradition that a Greek stage had an architectural background pierced with three doors ; but whether scenery was or was not used in addition to this, is still a vexed question. Further, what rules were to be laid down for the actors ? In the large open-air theatres of ancient Greece their stature was artificially heightened, they wore masks, and they spoke through a mouth-piece. Such devices could not be employed here ;

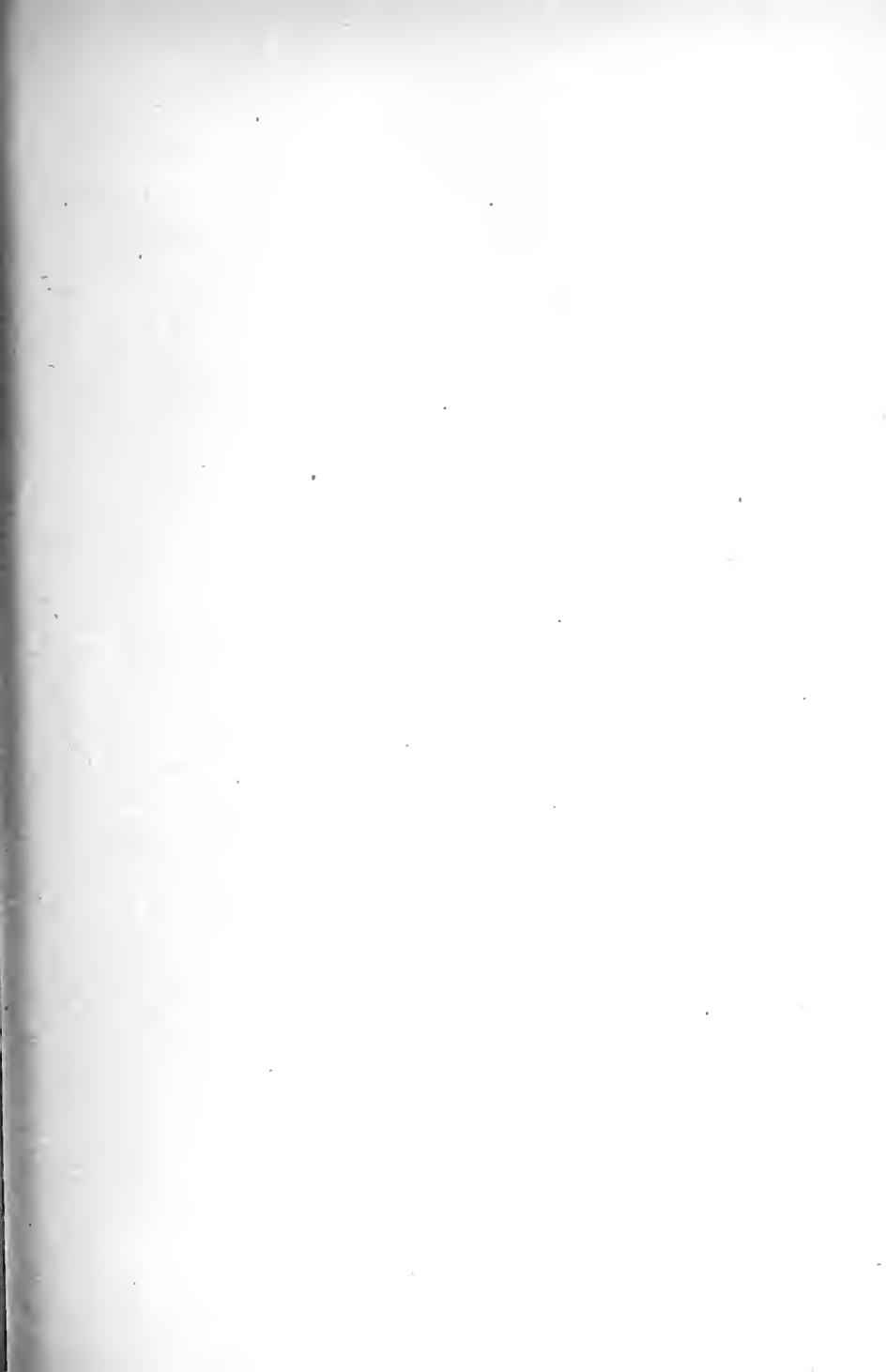
nor did we feel that the performance would gain in dignity if our actors declaimed their lines without gestures, standing at a respectful distance from each other—a method which is, I believe, called “plastic,” and is supposed to represent ancient custom. We determined after long and respectful deliberation to treat the “Ajax” as a modern play. We divided it into two scenes, which we might as well have called acts, for we dropped the curtain between them, and we engaged Mr. John O’Connor to paint a separate landscape for each. There remained the one distinguishing mark of the Greek stage, the Chorus, which we were obliged frankly to accept, and deal with as best we could. I have already mentioned the separate stage provided for its evolutions. Its utterances were set to music by Professor Macfarren; and Mr. Stanford, as he was in those days, taught the performers to sing, and then conducted. It was objected that Macfarren’s music was not Greek. Perhaps it was not—but it was effective, and contributed not a little to the success of the performance.

The choice of actors was not easy. Mr. Stephen readily consented to play Ajax, but for the rest, all was uncertain. Fortunately Dr. Waldstein had a large undergraduate acquaintance, and by his own exertions and those of his friends a number of aspirants to dramatic fame were got together. Many came, and many went away, rejected by our stern stage-manager, who would accept nothing short of the best. At last, however, the cast became fairly complete, and we had several rehearsals in the course of the Long Vacation. But we were still without a Tecmessa, when a fortunate accident threw in our way Mr. Macklin of Gonville and Caius College. I shall never forget his first appearance on the stage of a College Hall lent for rehearsal. The part had not been in his hands for more

than an hour, and he could not have read more than the opening lines, but as he walked on to the dais, book in hand, he became the person he had to represent; and succeeding study only developed into rare and beautiful completeness one of the most remarkable impersonations it has ever been my good fortune to witness.

Of all the difficulties with which a Greek performance is beset, perhaps that of dress is the greatest; and even after the costume has been designed, it is no easy matter to teach the actor to wear it in a natural and becoming manner. It is recorded that at Harvard the actors wore their dresses at every rehearsal; and in our later performances at Cambridge we have followed this excellent example to some extent. But when we played the "Ajax" we were inexperienced, and in fact none of us, except Dr. Waldstein, knew what Greek dress meant. On him, as was natural, the duties of costumier devolved; and, as in all other matters, he went to original authorities, as vase-paintings, bas-reliefs, and statues. From these the dresses were designed, and altered again and again until found satisfactory.

The play was given on the nights of 29th November, 30th November, and 1st December 1882, and on the afternoon of 2nd December. Our fears of failure proved groundless. It was a remarkable indication of the power of Sophocles that the attention of the audience never flagged during the two hours and a half during which the performance lasted. Even those ignorant of Greek were profoundly affected, and came a second and even a third time to see it. The applause was frequent, spontaneous, and well-timed. The best passages seemed to have a power of their own to make themselves appreciated, independent of the language in which they were written.





MR. M. R. JAMES AS PEITHETAIROS IN "THE BIRDS."

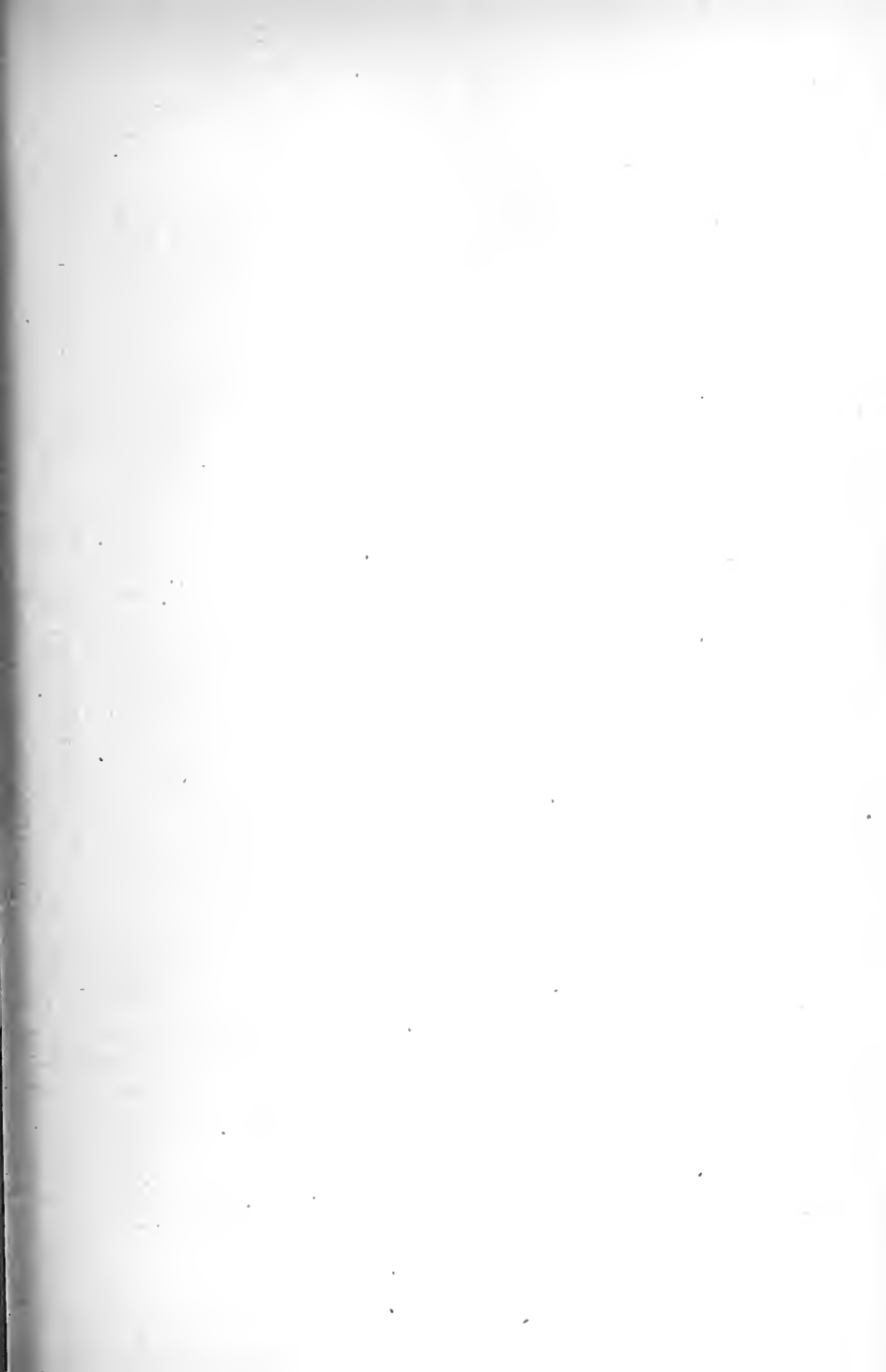
From a drawing by C. M. Newton.

I notice that contemporary critics speak of the acting with kindly commendation ; and I am glad to find that in their judgments there were no blots upon a performance of high average merit. Of Mr. Macklin's Tecmessa I have already spoken. We knew that Mr. Stephen would look the part of Ajax, but nobody could have been prepared for the dramatic power with which he realised the different phases of the character. Teucer also, who dominates the second part of the play, after Ajax is dead, found an admirable exponent in Mr. H. C. Cust. His presence and bearing stood him in good stead ; but those natural gifts would have been of little avail without the pathos of his grief, the scorn of his contempt for the Atridæ, and the tenderness with which he sheltered Tecmessa and her child.

When we came to balance the accounts of our receipts and expenses we found that the former had exceeded the latter by £112 ; which sum, as the treasurer told the guarantors, "it is proposed to apply to defraying a portion of the expenses of the next performance." This the committee lost no time in organising. Their minute-book informs me that on May 16, 1883, "it was agreed to play 'The Birds' of Aristophanes at the end of November next, and that Mr., now Sir Hubert, Parry should be requested to write the music." As I think on those days I marvel at our courage, at the delightful airiness with which we ignored difficulties, or skipped over them. Athenian comedy is separated from us by a far wider interval than Athenian tragedy. The comedies of Aristophanes not only belong to a civilisation which has completely passed away, but were written for particular occasions, and are full of personal allusions, the point of which is either wholly lost, or can only be ascertained by long and laborious research.

Further, many scenes which are delightful to read are very dreary in representation—as, for instance, the long contest between Æschylus and Euripides in “The Frogs.” And yet we undertook, in the lightness of our hearts, to set one of these before the public in six months’ time! No doubt, if Aristophanes was to be acted, we were right to begin with “The Birds.” It is a brilliant piece of poetry and fun, in which, as Mr. Swinburne happily observes, the humour of Rabelais is united to the lyrical grace of Shelley, it is well known, and it appeals to the eye as much as to the mind. A playgoer must be dull indeed who does not enter into the fun of the foundation of Cloud-Cuckoo-Town, and the humours of the Sovereign Birds.

The dresses of the Birds gave occasion for much discussion. It was finally decided that no attempt should be made to realise birds completely, for there are many lines in the play which show that the faces of the performers must have been visible. A fantastic combination of bird-plumage and human dress was therefore invented, consisting of a head-dress modelled after a bird’s real head, with a beak projecting from the forehead of the actor. The wings were attached to the ordinary Greek *chiton*, and made of canvas, painted in imitation of the real markings. The terminal quills were represented by a piece of bamboo, which the actor held in his hand under the canvas, so that he could extend or fold his wings at pleasure. We planned all this ourselves, and Mr. John O’Connor painted the wings in colours judiciously contrasted. The first entrance of the Birds was always received with long and loud applause; and it must be recorded that they not only looked pretty, but that they danced with grace, and acted with intelligence. It was impossible to have numerous





ONE OF THE BIRDS.

From a drawing by C. M. Newton.

rehearsals, as the performers were mostly hard-reading undergraduates, so that the "business" was invented on the stage, and varied at each representation; but they all thoroughly enjoyed their parts, and did their very best with them. The Jackdaw had the impertinence and inquisitiveness suitable to the character, and his by-play with the tall Flamingo was exceedingly varied and diverting. There was also a Cock who crowed and flapped his wings with comic self-approval; and much fun was made out of the eagerness with which they all hopped forward to pick up the grain which the Priest scattered at the Sacrifice.

Fortunately for us Sir Hubert Parry was delighted with his subject, and provided us with music which was not only received with enthusiasm when first written, but is still popular. Our composer was no slave to archaism. He knew that Greek methods in music could not be successfully reproduced, and therefore set himself to express, in a thoroughly modern way, the ideas suggested by the words and situations. He was ably seconded by his singers. None who heard are likely to forget the nuptial song, or the charm of Mr. G. F. Maquay's rendering of the Invocation to the Birds—one of those exquisite poems which Aristophanes was so fond of introducing in the midst of his wildest burlesque.

I should mention before I leave this delightful comedy, over which I spent some of the happiest days of my life, that we treated the text with the same freedom as that of the Ajax. We used the pruning-knife a good deal—some said not enough—and we divided what was left into three acts, for each of which Mr. O'Connor provided an appropriate scene. When the acting took place in the clouds, we indicated atmosphere by stretching a sheet of gauze

across the stage, behind which the Birds passed and re-passed, as though flying through the air. We played the comedy seven times ; always to full, sometimes to crowded, houses ; and could we have played it for a fortnight, I believe the house would have been as full at the end as it was at the beginning. It was estimated that 2700 people had witnessed it.

After these two successes we reposed awhile ; and having no play to mount, we secured our position by organising our committee. We had found by experience that the system into which we had accidentally drifted worked exceedingly well—namely, that a body of older men, carefully selected as likely to be useful in various ways—scholastic, archæological, or dramatic—should be permanently enrolled ; that they should select the play to be represented, the actors in which would, as a general rule, be undergraduates ; and that then they should extend their numbers temporarily. I will subjoin the rules we then drew up, which we have never seen cause to change :—

RULES FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GREEK PLAY COMMITTEE.

(AGREED TO, 1ST MARCH 1884.)

1. That a permanent Committee be established, called "the Greek Play Committee," consisting of not more than eighteen members resident at Cambridge, from whom shall be chosen a President, three Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Any member of the Committee ceasing to reside shall vacate his seat on the Committee. Vacancies on the Committee shall be filled up by co-optation.

2. That the permanent Committee shall invest or deposit its funds in the names of two Trustees, of whom the Treasurer shall be one ; and that the accounts shall be regularly audited once in each year by an auditor appointed by the permanent Committee.

3. That, when it is resolved to produce a Greek play, the Committee shall co-opt temporary or occasional members of Committee, so that the

whole number of the Committee shall not exceed twenty-four: the occasional members shall continue to be members of Committee until the end of the term next succeeding the representation of the play, or until the proposed representation has been abandoned.

4. That the Committee thus temporarily enlarged (which shall be known by the name of the play to be produced) shall appoint from amongst its members, in addition to the permanent officers, a Stage-manager, a Conductor of the Chorus, a Sub-committee for the election of actors, and such other Sub-committees as may be necessary.

It was soon decided to perform another play in the Michaelmas Term of 1885, and, mainly on the advice of Professor Jebb, we chose the "Eumenides" of Æschylus. We learnt by experience how sound this advice was; but before we had got the piece in hand, so to speak, I think that most of us were rather terrified at the magnitude of the task before us.

The personages to be represented, with the exception of Orestes and the Shade of Clytemnestra, are deities; and the Furies, or, as the Athenians called them, The Gracious Goddesses, compose the Chorus, and are therefore constantly before the public. How were they to be presented? and how were we to treat Pallas Athena, who presides at the trial of Orestes? Could we entrust such a part to an undergraduate? Gradually, as commonly happens when everybody is in earnest, difficulties vanished. A young lady of great dramatic ability, Miss J. E. Case, then a student at Girton College, was willing to play Athena; Mr. Macklin (already famous in the University for his impersonation of Tecmessa in the "Ajax") undertook Orestes; Dr. Waldstein found a vase-painting which taught us how to dress the Furies so that they might be terrible and not ridiculous; Mr. Stanford supplied the music, and Mr. O'Connor the scenery. The play requires three scenes—the Interior of the Temple at Delphi, the

Exterior of the Temple of Athena on the Acropolis at Athens, and the Court of Areopagus. All these are elaborate sets, and taxed our resources to the utmost. I have since learnt that my reconstruction of the Temple at Delphi—on the accuracy of which I greatly prided myself—was entirely wrong; but, fortunately for me, the public did not find me out; and even if they had, the acting of Mr. Dighton Pollock as Apollo, Mr. Macklin as Orestes, and Mr. Platts as the Shade of Clytemnestra would have made them forget any quantity of archæological shortcomings. But I cannot trust myself to speak of these things. I will call an impersonal witness—a critic in *The Saturday Review*.

“Of the first Act it is not too much to say that the impression it conveys is far more powerful than any that we have received from any stage representation whatsoever. The faultless grouping and noble massing together of colour are things never to be forgotten, and it would prove an impossible task to attempt to select any special excellence of movement or arrangement where all was perfect. We cannot, however, pass over Mr. Platts’ admirable rendering of the Shade of Clytemnestra in silence. . . . The gradual working up to the culminating point of passion, when the last of the Furies shakes off the spell of slumber under the tempest of Clytemnestra’s rage, could not have been bettered. Mr. Macklin’s Orestes was a performance of unusual power, displaying emotional qualities and a soundness of judgment not often to be met with. . . . The Apollo of Mr. Dighton Pollock was also admirable alike for gesture and diction. Miss Case spoke and moved with much grace and distinction as Athena. Of the gentlemen to whom the parts of the Furies were entrusted it would be difficult to speak too highly; and no small part of the overpowering effect of the whole performance was owing to their thoroughly artistic handling of somewhat risky material. Beauty was never lost sight of in horror.”

I have explained the constitution of our committee, and the point of view from which we approach Greek plays, in some detail, because it seems to me important that a chapter such as this, of limited length, should

explain principles, as well as describe the works represented. To what I have said above about our procedure, I should add a brief account of how we select our actors. A few months before the performance is to take place a notice of it is issued, and those who are willing to sing in the chorus, or to act, are invited to communicate with the stage-manager. In this way we are enabled to discover talent which, having regard to the size of the University, we could not otherwise get at. After some preliminary conversation a day is appointed on which possible capacities are tried. The men who come are invited either to declaim something that they know, or to learn a scene from the work selected for representation. A provisional assignment of parts is then made, and the rehearsals begin.

At the conclusion of the "Eumenides" two questions presented themselves, How soon should we play again? and what play should we give? The former question was soon settled by deciding not to perform again before 1887, but the second was more difficult. Our choice of plays is, in some respects, limited. We have never attempted a female chorus. No doubt the Greeks presented men dressed as women, who must have sung with male voices; but our musical contingent has always protested against that combination. On this occasion some of us pleaded for Euripides, others for the "Œdipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles; and finally it was agreed to attempt that masterpiece of Attic tragedy—partly, I think, because it had been given at Harvard (in 1881), and partly because we happened to have ready to our hands some sound and tried dramatic material.

We all realised the difficulty of the task before us, and we set to work with a steady determination to produce

the play in a manner worthy of itself and of the reputation we had already gained ; and I do not think that I am unduly partial if I record that we succeeded. This was the cast :—

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Œdipus | Mr. J. H. G. RANDOLPH, Trinity. |
| Jocasta | Mr. C. PLATTS, Trinity. |
| Creon | Mr. F. T. MILLER, Gonville and Caius. |
| Teiresias | Mr. H. HEAD, Trinity. |
| Priest of Zeus | Mr. L. G. B. FORD, King's. |
| Messenger from Corinth | Mr. M. R. JAMES, King's. |
| Herdsman of Laius | Mr. T. A. BERTRAM, Gonville and Caius. |
| Messenger from the Palace | Mr. H. B. SMITH, Trinity. |
| Leader of the Chorus | Mr. R. R. OTTLEY, Trinity. |

The Jocasta of Mr. Platts was quite up to the level of his Shade of Clytemnestra ; and Mr. Randolph's Œdipus surpassed all our expectations. The part is one of almost overwhelming difficulty ; and it would be no disgrace to even a tried actor of established reputation to say that he had failed in it. But Mr. Randolph, by natural ability and careful study, assisted by some lessons from Hermann Vezin, and a few reminiscences of Mounet-Sully, gave a clear and consistent realisation of the character, from the proud, patronising bearing in the opening scene, to the terrible pathos of the close. He was ably seconded by Creon and the rest ; and it was easy to see, from the demeanour of the audience, that they were profoundly impressed. I should add that the play gained greatly by Mr. Stanford's music, and that Mr. O'Connor provided a single scene of great beauty. We tried to indicate the despot by his environment : we gave him a marble palace, glowing with colour ; we clad him in the most sumptuous robes we could devise, with gold on his head and arms, and a golden head to his staff of office ; he was attended

by four stalwart guards ; and when the curtain rose the stage was crowded with the suppliant Thebans, who hailed him as their deliverer.

I have now nearly reached the limit of space allotted to me ; and though I am not weary, perhaps my readers are, so I will pass rapidly over the rest of my story.

After "Œdipus" three years elapsed before we played again, and then we determined to make trial of Euripides. We chose the "Ion," turning the chorus of waiting-women into one of serving-men. It was a venturesome experiment ; for the play is literary rather than dramatic, and the curiously involved plot, with its modern melodramatic interest, must be followed closely to be intelligible. The play was well acted, the *Ion* of Mr. Stephen Powys was eminently youthful and charming, and the music of Mr. C. Wood was appropriate ; but I doubt if the public verdict was as favourable as usual ; and in 1894, when we tried Euripides again and mounted the "Iphigenia in Tauris," there was an ominous falling off in the attendance. And yet this play, tried by the usual tests to which dramatic works are submitted, was as well acted and as carefully presented as any of our previous efforts. Our conclusion was that "Euripides the human" does not suit the end of the nineteenth century.

Lastly, in 1897, we gave "The Wasps" of Aristophanes, under somewhat changed conditions. The old theatre, which I have described above, had given place to a charming new playhouse, which we could not treat with the same easy familiarity. We made no attempt, therefore, to construct a separate chorus-platform, but treated the chorus as an integral part of the play, not as something external to it. The fun of "The Wasps" is readily understood, even by those who cannot follow the

Greek text, and our performance was received from beginning to end with roars of laughter. Not only was the trial, with the cock and the puppies, conspicuously successful, but even the third act, in which the old juryman is taught the manners of the polite world—a lesson which he loses no time in forgetting—was felt to be quite free from dulness. Mr. Reginald Balfour as Bdelycleon, and Mr. Fry as Philocleon, proved themselves excellent comedians, and they were admirably seconded by the others. The Wasps too were as waspish as the author could have wished, the music of Mr. T. T. Noble was bright and attractive, and the single scene, painted by Mr. Hemsley, representing an open place in Athens with the Acropolis in the distance, was a most beautiful and artistic production.

VIII

THE O.U.D.S.

By CLAUD NUGENT

I

IT is a great mistake to suppose that the art of acting is a modern development in the sister universities. As early as 1535 it was so encouraged at Cambridge that nine lecturers of Trinity were ordered by statute to act publicly every Christmas on pain of 10s. fine for non-compliance. At Oxford also plays were written in Latin and English, and represented by members of the university in the presence of the kings and queens of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When Queen Elizabeth visited Oxford in 1566, and again in 1592, it was customary to produce plays on Sunday evenings in Christ Church Hall. On the first of the two visits a Latin play called "Progne," by a Canon of Christ Church, was produced. On the same occasion an English play called "Palæmon and Archyte," written by R. Edwards, was acted, in which a real pack of hounds was introduced into Tom Quadrangle to lend effect to a hunting scene. The audience grew so excited when the hounds gave tongue that they ran out into the quadrangle, and left the play to go on by itself. Nor was acting at this time confined to Christ Church alone ; for at St. John's College in 1607 they actually elected a Prince of the revels, who should serve

as a Christmas lord to superintend all the forthcoming festivities for the months of December and January. It will be worth while to record very briefly the causes which led to this curious institution. It seems that on the 31st of October in the above-mentioned year the graduates and undergraduates were collected in their Hall to celebrate All Saints' Eve. The scene was a riotous one, because, although the object of the meeting was to witness divers sports in preparation for Christmas, there appeared to be no clear arrangement what the sports should be, or by whom they should be represented. The Seniors were content to be onlookers; Second-Year men, called "Poulderings," were anxious to exhibit their ability; but the Freshmen, "Punies of the first year," were not remarkable for their patience, and the tumult in consequence became so great, that no sports could on that night be held at all. This led, as I have said, to the election of a "Christmas Prince," and a certain Mr. Thomas Tucker was the chosen one. We have his formal title, which runs as follows:—

"The most magnificent and renowned Thomas, by the favour of Fortune, Prince of Alba Fortunata,¹ Lord St. John's, High Regent of ye Hall, Duke of St. Giles',² Marquesse of Magdalen's,² Landgrave of ye Grove,³ County Palatine of ye Cloisters,³ Chief Bailiff of ye Beaumonts,⁴ High Ruler of Rome,⁵ Master of the Manor of

¹ Alludes to the name of the founder of the College, Sir Thomas White.

² The parishes which border on St. John's.

³ Part of the home domain.

⁴ The name of some lands belonging to the College, on which stood originally the Palace of the Beaumonts, built by King Henry I., and still surviving in the name of Beaumont Street.

⁵ The name of a piece of land on the north side of Oxford, near a walk which used to be called Non Ultra.

Waltham¹ Governor of Gloucester Green."² A rate was levied on all the members of the College in proportion to their ability, the President being taxed to the extent of forty shillings, and Mr. Laud, who was none other than the future Archbishop of Canterbury, furnishing on two separate occasions sums of ten shillings. The public installation of the Prince took place on the evening of St. Andrew's Day. The first play was produced with the title of "Ara Fortunae," or "Fortune's Altar." The next performance took place on Christmas Day, when Prince Tucker sat down at the High Table in the Vice-President's place, and was served with a magnificent banquet, including the customary boar's head. The evening ended with an interlude, consisting of "Saturnalia," which were eminently successful, "because," says the narrator, "there were no strangers to trouble us." A tragedy called "Philomela" was given on December 29th, fairly successfully, although the carpenters were by no means ready with the stage, and the Prince himself, who was to play the part of Tereus, had got an extremely bad cold in his head. On New Year's Eve there seems to have been a complete fiasco in a play called "Time's Complaint." The Prince and his suite passed through the quadrangle, honoured by three successive volleys of shot from fifty or three score guns; but no sooner was the play begun than the tale of misfortunes commenced. The "Prologue," who had only six lines to say, clean forgot them all, and after a long stage-wait abruptly went behind the scenes. One of the comic characters was the Goodwife Spigott. Unfortunately she came on the boards before her proper time, and had to fill in the interval by some

¹ The manor of Waltham, or Walton, belonged to the College.

² Literally a meadow close to Gloucester Hall, from which it derives its name.

meaningless babble, which was not well appreciated by the audience. The low comedian, in acting the part of Humphrey Swallow, a drunken cobbler, used his opportunities with a gusto which was anything but pleasing to the company at large: he so emphatically over-acted his part, that he delayed the action of the scene and only produced disgust. On Sunday evening, January 10th, being properly the last day of the vacation, it occurred to some merry spirits to produce a mock play, called "The Seven Days of the Week," which proved to be the most successful performance during the reign of the Prince. In the first week of term the Prince and his fellow-actors were invited to Christ Church to witness a rival performance, entitled "Yule Tide," which indulged in some witty pleasantries against Prince Tucker. The Prince's resignation took place on February 9th, Shrove Tuesday. As his reign had been introduced by a play dedicated to Fortune, so also was its close commemorated by an exhibition, entitled "*Ara seu Tumulus Fortunae*," to designate the final term of Fortune's dynasty. At the close of the performance the Prince, now but a prince in name, was conducted to his own private chamber in a solemn funeral procession.

Thus England was merry England before the Puritan came and swept all such joys away.

II

About the year 1845 Oxford was passing through one of her witty periods, which are now, alas! so unfrequent. Nowadays the art of satire and epigram seems almost lost at the Universities. Since the days of Calverley's poems, I do not think anything in that line has been

written which is likely to survive the test of time. But fifty years ago it was a different story. Those were the days of the "Art of Pluck" and the "Hints to Freshmen," followed in 1869 by the "Oxford Spectator," and the "Tatler." Then came the desire for the drama, the desire, that is, to put wit into action. Brazenose College must have the credit of being the first college to start theatricals. The late Frank Talfourd, together with some fellow-undergraduates, started a society called the "Oxford Dramatic Amateurs." They did not act very much in Oxford, but generally gave their performances at Henley during the Regatta week, in much the same way as the "Old Stagers" do in the Canterbury week. Their first public venture was in 1847, when a burlesque by Talfourd, entitled "Macbeth Travestie," was performed, with the author as Lady Macbeth, and Samuel Brandram as Macbeth. The entertainment concluded with "Bombastes Furioso," in which Mr. Brandram actually danced.¹ So successful was this performance, that it was subsequently repeated at the residence of Talfourd's father in Russell Square before a large audience, comprising Charles Dickens, John Leech, Albert Smith, the Keeleys, and other distinguished persons.

In 1848 "Ion," by Mr. Talfourd, senior, was given at Brazenose College, and this was probably the first public dramatic entertainment given by undergraduates in Oxford during this century. This performance was very near being a failure, because Cust, an undergraduate of the College, now better known as the Dean of York, threw up his part (a very important one) at the last moment in order to go to the Queen's ball.

¹ The late George Augustus Sala made a picture of the *pas de quatre* danced on this occasion.

In 1849 the undergraduates grew more ambitious and took Miss Kelley's (the old Royalty) Theatre, where they repeated "Macbeth Travestie," preceded by a drama in which Mr. Brandram and Mrs. Fanny Stirling appeared.

In 1850 another performance was got up at Oxford, in which "Box and Cox" was given in place of "Thumping Legacy," which for some reason was given up, although it had been put into rehearsal with Edmund Yates as Jerry, and Charles Kegan Paul as Rosetta. As an *entr'acte* Mr. Brandram sang "Caller Herrin'." The performance concluded with a burlesque of "Hamlet."

In the same year, fired by the success of the Brazenose Amateurs, we now find Balliol taking up the work. A club was started there by Herman Charles Merivale and Robert Reece, who called it "The Tents of the Keanites" (Merivale being a particular friend of the late Charles Kean). A humble actor, who had been lately playing in a travelling company at Oxford, and was now earning a small recompense by reading out "cribs" to lazy undergraduates, was engaged, and to his experience the Balliol Amateurs owed their success. "To Oblige Benson" and "Crinoline" were the plays chosen, and were given in 1850, to the horror of the authorities. Besides Reece and Merivale, many well-known persons took part in this performance, including Edmond Warre (now Head Master of Eton College); in fact, the performance took place in his room. The Dons got wind of the matter, and it reached the ears of Professor Jowett. Thereupon a meeting was held in "Common Room," but with very good sense they let the undergraduates alone, and a repetition of the performance on a larger scale was allowed, to which the Dons themselves and ladies were invited.

There is no record of any further acting having taken place until 1866, when the "Shooting Stars," a more important Society than any hitherto started in Oxford, was formed. On July 8th of that year they acted the "Comical Countess" and "Lalla Rookh" (burlesque) in the Masonic Hall. In November they played "Dearest Mamma" and "Fair Helen," by Vincent Amcotts, at the Victoria Music Hall. In February 1868, at the same place, they performed "Wonderful Woman" and "Lurline." During this period, also, an excellent Society was formed at St. John's College, under the management of Mr. E. Nolan. This Society went in for comedies and burlesques. During the years 1866-68 they played "The Rivals," "She Stoops to Conquer," "Scrap of Paper," "Still Waters Run Deep," also the burlesques of "Iphigenia" and "Romeo and Juliet."

In 1869 the authorities put their feet down, and acting at Oxford was positively interdicted.

III

In 1879 commences a new era in the history of Oxford acting. Hitherto, as will have been seen, the various dramatic clubs, if we except the "Shooting Stars," were purely of a private nature, and restricted to their several Colleges. But now began a fierce fight for the drama between Don and Undergraduate. It should be mentioned that the only form of entertainment at this time provided for the amusement of undergraduates was a performance at the Victoria Music Hall, more familiarly known as the "Vic," and now happily abolished. Many are the stories told of the disgusting scenes which took place

within its walls, not only on the stage, but also in the auditorium ; for while the artistes never scrupled to hurl at the audience any nasty things they had in their minds, the occupants of the stalls retaliated with any nasty things they had in their hands ; and yet this state of things was passed over by the very authorities who persistently refused to allow the legitimate drama to be performed either by professionals or amateurs during term time. In this year the Hon., and now Rev., James G. Adderley came up to Christ Church, and it was to his enthusiasm, and to the enthusiasm which he infused into the minds of his contemporaries, that the dramatic ball was set rolling which has never yet stopped.

A sharp tussel eventuated, firstly, in the subdual of prejudice; secondly, in absolute concurrence; and finally, in hearty co-operation. It only rests with the undergraduates of the future to see that they do not abuse their privileges, but maintain the high standard which up to the present time has existed.

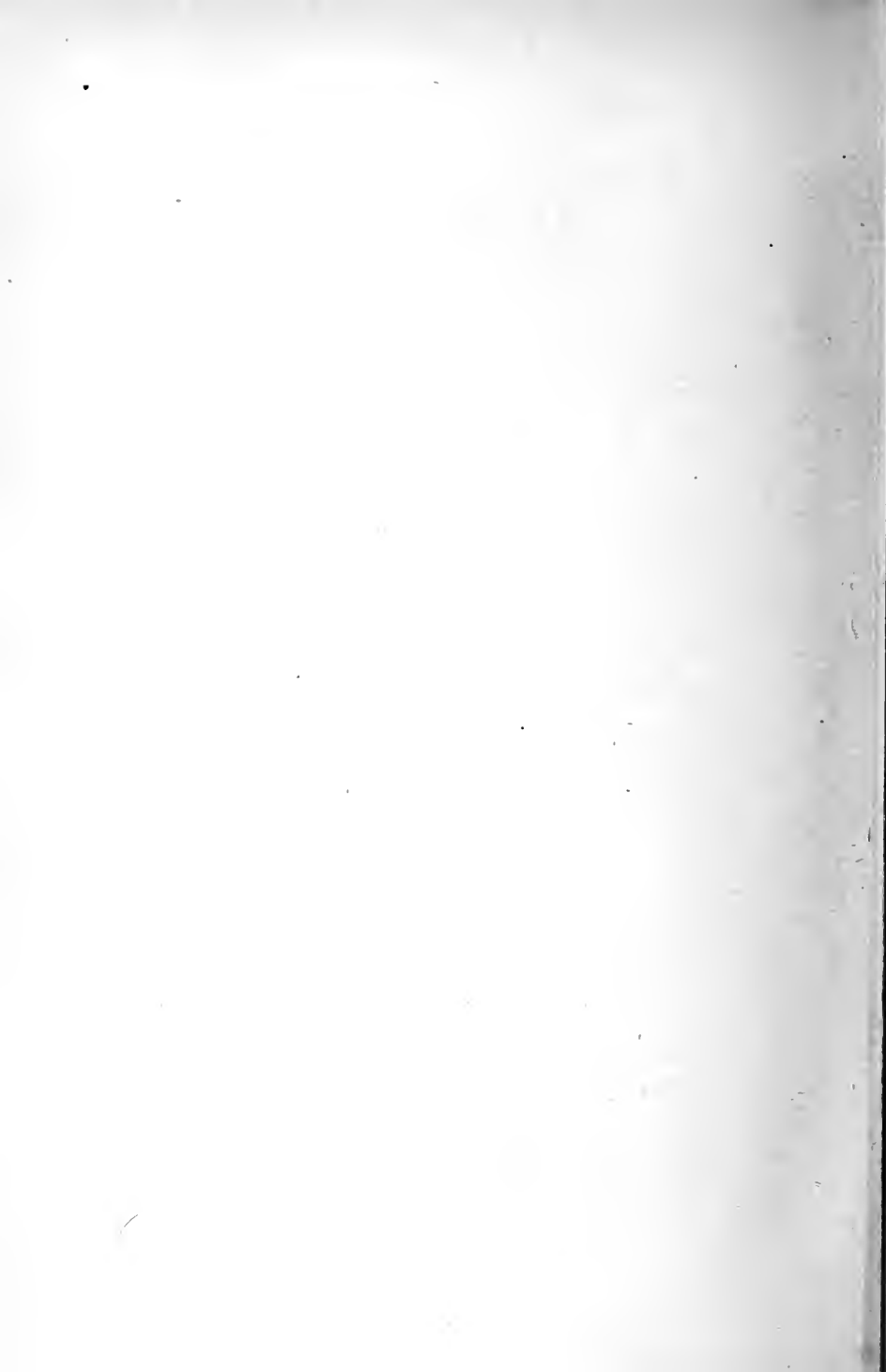
It occurred to Mr. Adderley and to some of his Christ Church friends to endeavour to form a Society similar to the famous Cambridge Amateur Dramatic Club. Being fully aware of the prejudice with which they had to contend, they satisfied themselves by starting in a small way. They issued invitations to their Christ Church friends, and prepared a performance, consisting of "The Area Belle" and "Box and Cox." The performance was to take place in Mr. Adderley's room in Peckwater Quadrangle, and much consternation amongst the Dons was caused at the sight of scenery and footlights being publicly carried through the College gates. The Censors were dismayed, but hardly knew how to stop it.

There is an old rule at Christ Church by which not



HON. AND REV. J. G. ADDERLEY AS DINAH'S NURSE IN
"VILLIKINS AND HIS DINAH."

From a photograph.



more than four supper rations are allowed to each person, and as Mr. Adderley had applied for forty suppers, the Censors thought that by refusing this request the performance would probably fall to the ground. But a means of evading this regulation readily presented itself to Mr. Adderley; he carefully examined the rules, and finding nothing to prevent his doing so, ordered cold luncheon for forty, which he kept in a cool place till the evening. Both supper and theatricals were a great success, and a few days afterwards the actors were sent for to the Deanery, where they repeated the performance before the late Duke of Albany, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford being also amongst the audience. They now organised themselves into a Society called the Oxford University Philothespian Society, and set about to prepare for a public performance the following term.

The subjoined is the list of the original members :—

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Hon. J. G. ADDERLEY, Christ Church, <i>President</i> . | J. W. GILBART SMITH, Ch. Ch. |
| Hon. R. ADDERLEY, Ch. Ch. | Sir HENRY LAMBERT, Bart., Ch. Ch. |
| H. D. ASTLEY, Ch. Ch. | W. OGLE, Ch. Ch. |
| F. E. SHAFTO ADAIR, Ch. Ch. | Sir GEORGE SITWELL, Bart., Ch. Ch. |
| ELLIOTT LEES, Ch. Ch. | ALAN MACKINNON, Trinity. |

Dr. Evans of Pembroke, who was at that time Vice-Chancellor, absolutely refused to give his sanction to a public performance. "You may do what you like in your colleges," he said, "but publicly I forbid you to act." Mr. Adderley took the word "colleges" to include "lodgings," and thereupon arranged a very successful performance at 26 Cornmarket, where "Ici on parle Français," the Screen scene from "School for Scandal," and "Villikins and his Dinah" were given to crowded audiences. It is not to be supposed that this did not reach

the ears of the authorities, and it was afterwards ascertained that the Proctors actually came to the door of the house, but on hearing that certain distinguished academic ladies were present, thought it better not to interfere, and accordingly retired.

In the Michaelmas term, 1880, the Vice-Chancellor was again approached, and once more refused his sanction. Nothing daunted, however, the Society risked his displeasure, and in February 1881 played "Dearer than Life" and a burlesque called "Lord Lovell and Lady Nancy Bell" at the Templar's Hall. Meeting with no rebuke, "The Philothespians" were emboldened to attempt a performance on even a larger scale. Accordingly, in the Summer term of 1881 they took the Holywell Music Room, and announced two public performances of "Clandestine Marriage." But this time the Vice-Chancellor was aroused, and sent to Mr. Adderley a few days before the performance, and remonstrated; but being a kind-hearted man, and knowing that the Society had been put to much trouble and expense, he gave them permission to act, but with the solemn charge that it must never occur again. The Philothespians made full use of this permission, and ordered to be printed a thousand circulars, headed with the words, "By permission of the Vice-Chancellor." About four hundred tickets were sold. Heads of Colleges, even Proctors came; and if it had not been for the deadening feeling that this was to be the last appearance of the Philothespians, there could not have been a pleasanter or more successful show. There seemed nothing for it now but to dissolve the Society, and a meeting was called to consider the question; it was decided, however, by a majority of one, to continue, and club-rooms were taken in St. Aldates, where many minor performances took place, including

Burnand and Sullivan's "Cox and Box," with Adderley as Cox, Capel Cure as Box, and Alan Mackinnon as Sergeant Bouncer. There is not space to record all the smaller performances which took place in the Club House, in the Holywell Music Room, and the Bicester Town Hall, but they were of sufficient importance to keep the name of the Society before the public, and to infuse sufficient enthusiasm amongst the members as to strengthen them for the final struggle. In most of these performances the leading lights were the Hon. J. G. Adderley, Mr. Mackinnon, H. A. Tipping, Hon. G. Coleridge, and Mr. H. D. Astley, who looked and played the female parts to perfection.

The Midsummer term of this year was the last term of Dr. Evans's Vice-Chancellorship. The knowledge of this fact emboldened the Philothespians to announce a performance during Commemoration. The pieces chosen were "Husband to Order" and "Little Toddlekins." Very fortunately for the Society a new Senior Proctor at this time came into office—the Rev. H. Scott Holland, now Canon of St. Paul's. He was kind enough to throw himself heart and soul into the matter. He interviewed Dr. Evans, asking his leave for the performance to take place on condition it were conducted in a more private manner. Dr. Evans's reply was, "That he would not object, provided the matter were not directly brought under his notice"; but as ill-luck would have it, it *was* brought directly under his notice, and on the very morning of the day upon which the performance was to take place Mr. Adderley received a letter, which read as follows: "The Vice-Chancellor considers that the performance announced in the Holywell Rooms is a breach of the Statutes, and a contempt of his authority, and therefore requests

Mr. Adderley to call upon him on Thursday at twelve o'clock."

Mr. Adderley knew too well that this implied that, if he acted on that day (Monday) he would be sent down on the Thursday, which would be fatal to his University career. He thereupon called at once upon the Vice-Chancellor, and obtained an interview one hour before the curtain was timed to rise. "Why do you come here?" said Dr. Evans; "I told you to come next Thursday." "I cannot wait till next Thursday," replied Adderley. "I hear you are going to send me down: I want to know if this is true before I go and act. I shall not act if you are going to send me down." "I decline to answer you; you must come on Thursday." With a heavy heart Adderley left the room to play the parts of Madame Phillipeau and Amanthis. Through the mediation, however, of the Senior Proctor, Dr. Evans was induced to look lightly on the matter; and when the dreaded Thursday arrived, received Adderley in the most friendly manner, saying, "I should be sorry to do anything disagreeable, as this is my last day of office: I shall not trouble you any more after to-day. Good-bye!" and they shook hands.

In the Michaelmas term, 1882, Adderley resigned the Presidency of the Club, and as all the original members were reading for their final schools, they were unable to take much active interest in the affairs of the Society. Coleridge and Mackinnon resigned their places on the Committee, and G. Gurney of Merton was elected President. Fortunately, however, the dramatic flame was fanned to almost a furnace by the arrival at this time of Arthur Bouchier from Eton, who is now recognised as one of our leading actors, and has even had a London theatre of his own. The Society had also a strong arm of

support in Mr. W. L. Courtney, a tutor of New College, now better known in connection with the *Daily Telegraph* and as editor of the *Fortnightly Review*. It was due, perhaps, to these two gentlemen as much as to any other cause that the Club was awakened to fresh activity, and preparations were made for renewing "the fight for the drama." The important question was to decide what attitude should be adopted towards the new Vice-Chancellor, the late Professor Jowett. The course which was hit upon was impudent, but at all events had the effect of bringing the whole matter to a head at once. An invitation was sent to Dr. Jowett to come to a grand performance of "Money" in the Holywell Music Room. Needless to say, the Vice-Chancellor could scarcely ignore the fiat of his predecessor without some show of disapproval; but happily, owing again to the hearty support of the Senior Proctor, he was more easily persuaded to look leniently upon the matter, and finally induced to call together a meeting of the Philothespians at his house, there to give his irrevocable decision, which has remained unaltered to this day: Firstly, he sanctioned the performances already announced to take place at the Holywell Music Rooms; secondly, he gave permission for public performances at Oxford on two conditions—(1) that only plays by Shakespeare and Greek plays were to be acted, (2) that ladies were to take the female parts.

Four performances were given of "Money," which was preceded by a prologue and a farce. The Vice-Chancellor was himself present on one evening, and Lytton's famous comedy was played to crowded houses. The prologue was delivered by the old president and founder, Mr. Adderley. The last four lines are as follows:—

" But now farewell, they call for my removal,
I'm only here to buy your best approval.
This is a serious sale, and nothing funny ;
You give us your applause, *we* give you ' Money ! ' "

Bourchier as Sir John Vesey and R. Goring Thomas as Stout appear, between them, to have carried off the palm. G. Gurney played Graves, and W. J. Morris of Jesus, who has since done so much for the Club, doubled the parts of Sharp and the Old Member. Alfred Evelyn was played by Pryce Hamer, and Glossmore by W. H. Spottiswoode. It seems to have been singularly successful, and was spoken of very well at the time in the London papers.

Needless to say that the snuff-box episode in the Club Scene occasioned numberless practical jokes. On one occasion it was filled full of cayenne-pepper, with disastrous results ; on another occasion with appalling asafœtida, which made its presence felt even on the audience ; and on more than one occasion a general game of hide-and-seek was played with the harmless, necessary box, for which the Old Member perpetually cries out. The part of Georgina Vesey was played by the present Lord Wolverton, then " Freddy " Glyn, who greatly objected to shaving his moustache, and at the entreaty of the Committee finally consented to compromise the matter by having it gummed over with gold-beater's skin, which was always proving refractory, and qualifying the fair Georgina to enter the ranks with the " bearded lady." Georgina also spoke with a very gruff voice, and her father, impersonated by Arthur Bourchier, possessed a somewhat high-pitched one, this reversal of the right order of things frequently causing much amusement.

During the remainder of 1882, and during most of

1883, the Club contented themselves with small private performances at Bicester and elsewhere, in which a very valuable acquisition was found in Lionel Monckton, their musical director, who is so well known now as not only a composer, but also as a dramatic critic. Smoking concerts also frequently took place at the new club-room at Canterbury House, King Edward Street. The dining accommodation was increased.

Club colours were instituted, of pink and old gold, a sash of which had to be worn by the members at their various dinners. In fact, the Society had now grown to be not only a dramatic club, but also a social club, in like manner to the Cambridge Amateur Dramatic Club, with this exception only, that the Philothespians had not got their own private theatre like the more fortunate Cambridge Club. Arthur Bouchier was now President, and with the co-operation of principally Courtney and Mackinnon, set about arranging for their first Shakespearian production. "Merchant of Venice" was the play selected, and took place at the Town Hall on December 4th to 8th. It will be as well to give the cast:—

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Duke of Venice | W. J. MORRIS, B.A., Jesus College. |
| Prince of Arragon | H. S. CAREY, Pembroke " |
| Antonio | E. G. GORDON, Merton " |
| Bassanio | W. L. COURTNEY, M.A., New " |
| Salarino | G. PRITCHARD, University " |
| Salanio | G. F. STAFFARD, Balliol " |
| Salario | E. HARRINGTON, Christ Church " |
| Gratiano | A. M. MACKINNON, B.A., Trinity " |
| Lorenzo | G. H. AITKEN, Oriel " |
| Shylock | ARTHUR BOURCHIER, Christ Church " |
| Tubal | G. H. LECHMERE STUART, Magdalen " |
| Launcelot Gobbo | W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT, Balliol " |
| Old Gobbo | W. J. MORRIS, B.A., Jesus " |
| Leonardo | EARL OF NORBURY, Christ Church " |
| | &c. &c. |
| Portia | Mrs. W. L. COURTNEY. |
| Nerissa | Miss J. F. ARNOLD. |
| Jessica | Mrs. WOODS. |

It will be seen from the above cast, and it is an interesting fact to notice, that whereas at the foundation of the Club nearly all its members were Christ Church men, now they are far more scattered over all the Colleges of Oxford. This was an encouraging sign for the future, and gave good reason to hope that the dramatic art was increasing in its popularity amongst the undergraduates.

Mr. Clement Scott, the well-known dramatic critic for the *Daily Telegraph*, gave a very full account of this the first fully authorised production of the Philothespians, and enlarges in no unmeasured terms on the satisfactory issue to the previous efforts of the originators of the movement. "It is due," he writes, "to Mr. Bouchier of Christ Church, to Mr. Scott Holland, to the Hon. J. G. Adderley of Christ Church, to Mr. W. L. Courtney of New College, and to many others, that the Oxford Town Hall, usually devoted to second-rate performances, presented last evening such a remarkable sight. The Vice-Chancellor, when he attends the performance, as he intends to do to-morrow night, will not regret his sanction. At any rate, he will hear a play by Shakespeare, from first to last, more intelligibly and intelligently performed than it can ever hope to be under any other conditions." Mr. F. E. Weatherly, the well-known song writer, and at that time an Oxford coach, wrote the prologue, which was delivered by the Hon. J. G. Adderley. This was followed by an overture, composed by Lionel Monckton, who himself conducted the orchestra, and was likewise responsible for all the glees and music incidental to the piece. Mr. Scott proceeds to mention with special commendation the Shylock of Mr. Bouchier, the Portia of Mrs. Courtney, the Gratiano of Mr. MacKinnon, and the Duke of Mr. W. J. Morris. He mentions

that Mr. W. Bromley-Davenport, now M.P. for Macclesfield and Congleton, is "quaint without being extravagant." He mentions Mr. Courtney's Bassanio as "an excellent specimen of elocution."

The "Merchant of Venice" was also repeated at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, on the evening of December 12th, by the special invitation of the Council, all the cast being put up in the neighbourhood; on the next afternoon and evening at the Theatre Royal, Leamington; and on the following afternoon at the Vaudeville Theatre in London, in aid of the Royal General Theatrical Fund. The Oxford scenery would not in all cases fit these various theatres; and some amusement was caused, I am told, by the Rialto in Venice being, in one place, represented by the Royal Crescent at Bath. The cast, also, had to be in certain cases altered, as the ladies declined to play during this tour. Excellent substitutes were, however, found in Miss Houliston, Miss Kate Lee, and Mrs. Dixon.

Mr. Mackinnon also arranged a repetition of the "Merchant of Venice" at Charterhouse School, where the ladies consented to resume their former parts.

An amusing adventure occurred on the opening night. One of the Proctors, led on by over-zealous bull-dogs, made a raid on the performers as they left the improvised pressing-room belonging to a bicycle firm next door to the Town Hall. On being asked to give their names and addresses, in the usual way, for not being in cap and gown, two of the performers, being so thoroughly in the spirit of their parts, and fearing to keep the stage waiting, gave their names as Shylock and Launcelot Gobbo, Number One, High Street, Venice!!

During the tour which followed, the Club had the temerity to give a morning performance at the Vaudeville

Theatre in London, and the outburst of professional indignation can easily be imagined. During one of Shylock's pauses for effect in the Trial scene, that effect was made by a well-known veteran actor hurling the remainder of the speech at him from the stalls, thinking he had forgotten his part!

At Charterhouse School the stage was suddenly plunged into darkness during the Casket scene, and the more Shylock, the stage-manager, stormed and stamped the darker it became, the fact being that he was standing on the indiarubber pipe that connected all the stage lights with the main gas-jet in the building, and which ran through the prompt entrance!

In February 1884 "Vice Versa" and "Withered Leaves" were given at Bicester, but as professional actresses were on this occasion engaged, it was looked upon by the Vice-Chancellor as a breach of the agreement which had been made with him. On May 15th of the same year a performance, which proved to be the last given by the Philothespians, was arranged at the Town Hall in aid of the Oxford Fire Brigade. Amongst other items, the Quarrel scene from "The Rivals" was given by W. J. Morris and Lechmere Stuart; "A Most Unwarrantable Intrusion," by Adderley and Mackinnon; and the inevitable "Cox and Box," which was only remarkable on this occasion in that Arthur Bouchier took a part whose "vocal villainies all desire to shirk."

Now came a very serious crisis in the history of Oxford acting, caused by a breach between the non-dramatic element and the dramatic, the former becoming numerically stronger, and wanting the Club to be run more as a dining and a card club than anything else. Thereupon they elected W. J. Morris to be President

in place of Bouchier. The latter appealed to the old members, and J. G. Adderley and Alan Mackinnon came speedily up to Oxford to move and second a resolution which was in the nature of a compromise, with a view to keeping the Club on its legs.

By this motion, which was successfully carried, Arthur Bouchier was to be elected stage-manager, with absolute authority over the dramatic side of the Club as opposed to Club matters. The internal arrangements of the Club, however, had now become very unsatisfactory, and was growing so unpopular, that the authorities, never more than lukewarm, were determined to put an end to a Club which would offer so little organised resistance. During the Long Vacation therefore, Bouchier, Adderley, and Mackinnon had a meeting by appointment at the Mitre, where Bouchier suggested the reconstruction of the Society on popular lines; doing away with the old name, and calling it in future "The Oxford University Dramatic Society," and electing a committee comprising the Presidents of Vincents, Bullingdon, the Union, the Boating Club, the Football Club, the Cricket Club, the Athletic Club, and so on, besides several of the Philothespian Committee. Adderley at first felt very keenly the idea of breaking with the past; but after careful discussion there seemed no other feasible manner of placing the Club on a substantial basis, and of restoring it to the good graces of the authorities, so Adderley was induced to waive his objections, and the plan was carried out.

I should be sorry to pass away from this portion of my narrative without a slight review of the last three years; for although from the time of the foundation of the O.U.D.S. the Club has never looked back, but has gained more and more strength and popularity every

succeeding year, it must not be for a moment forgotten that it would never have been possible had it not been for the indefatigable energy and the untiring zeal of three gentlemen. To James Adderley I attribute the foundation of the dramatic movement, and to Arthur Bouchier the consolidation of the O.U.D.S. as a recognised 'Varsity institution. It would be unfair to omit that Alan Mackinnon's stage productions of the various plays for which he has been responsible entitle him to no small share of the praise which modern Oxford audiences have lavished on them.

The Lent term of 1885 was principally occupied in consolidating the new Society, and preparing for their inaugural performance. A. G. Grant Asher of Brazenose College was now President; L. E. R. Lance of Brazenose College, Secretary, and a most indefatigable secretary he was; L. Owen of New College was Treasurer, while Mackinnon held the post of Stage-Manager, and Bouchier that of Acting Manager, W. L. Courtney of New College being Auditor. There was a Provisional Committee, consisting of—

Hon. J. G. ADDERLEY, Christ Church.
W. E. BOLITHO, Trinity.
Hon. C. COLERIDGE, Trinity.
Lord KENYON, Christ Church.
C. G. LANG, Balliol.
B. P. LASCELLES, Magdalen.
D. H. MACLEAN, New.

A. M'NEIL, Trinity.
H. V. PAGE, Wadham.
W. H. SPOTTISWOODE, Balliol.
T. C. TOLER, Christ Church.
ELU WOOD, Merton.
R. WILLIAMS WYNN, Christ Church.¹

¹ In addition to the names mentioned above, the following were also original members:—

P. L. AGNEW, New.
A. T. ARNALL, Brazenose.
C. W. BARRY, „
Hon. A. BLIGH, Christ Church.
E. BUCKLEY, St John's.
H. C. BUSH, Hertford.
H. W. CAVE, Balliol.
A. R. COBB, New.
Hon. G. CURZON, All Souls.
E. HARRINGTON, Christ Church.

F. J. HUMPHREYS, Brazenose.
E. A. MITCHELL INNES, Balliol.
R. H. PEMBERTON, New.
R. H. PHILIPSON, New.
S. J. PORTAL, Christ Church.
G. W. RICKETTS, Oriel.
A. ROTHERHAM, Balliol.
N. E. STANTON, Christ Church.
S. H. LECHMERE STUART, Magdalen.
J. H. WARE, Brazenose.

There were fifty-two members in all. Charming club-rooms were taken in the High Street, which rooms have since been merged in to the Gridiron Club. W. J. Morris, C. Egerton Green, G. H. Aitken, and other members of the Philothespian's Committee subsequently joined the ranks of the O.U.D.S. after the old Club had been wound up, and the photographs and records of the old Club were transferred to the keeping of the Committee of the O.U.D.S., so that the continuity of the Dramatic Society founded by Adderley was thus preserved.

The inaugural performance of the O.U.D.S. took place in the Town Hall on May 9th to 15th, 1885. The play, "The First Part of King Henry IV.," was very carefully prepared, rehearsals extending over two terms, and it would be safe to say that the O.U.D.S. never had a better played show. As well as the principals, the secondary parts, and especially the supers, were far above the general level. The piece was produced under the direction of Mackinnon, who was more than usual to be commended, owing to the terrible difficulties with which he had to cope. The art of converting the large but inconvenient Town Hall into a stage capable of bearing a battle of thirty men in suits of chain armour, in a scene of scattered bushes and a fair-sized hillock, was no light task; but all passed off without those hitches so common amongst amateurs. A prologue was spoken by C. G. Lang (President of the Union), written by the Hon. G. N. Curzon, now Lord Curzon of Kedleston, the newly-appointed Viceroy of India. I cannot refrain from quoting the four following lines, however pressed for space I am:—

"The curtain's rising—at this shrine of science
We meet to join in nuptial alliance
Oxford, a bachelor paerclaro homine,
And the famed Grecian maiden called Melpomene."

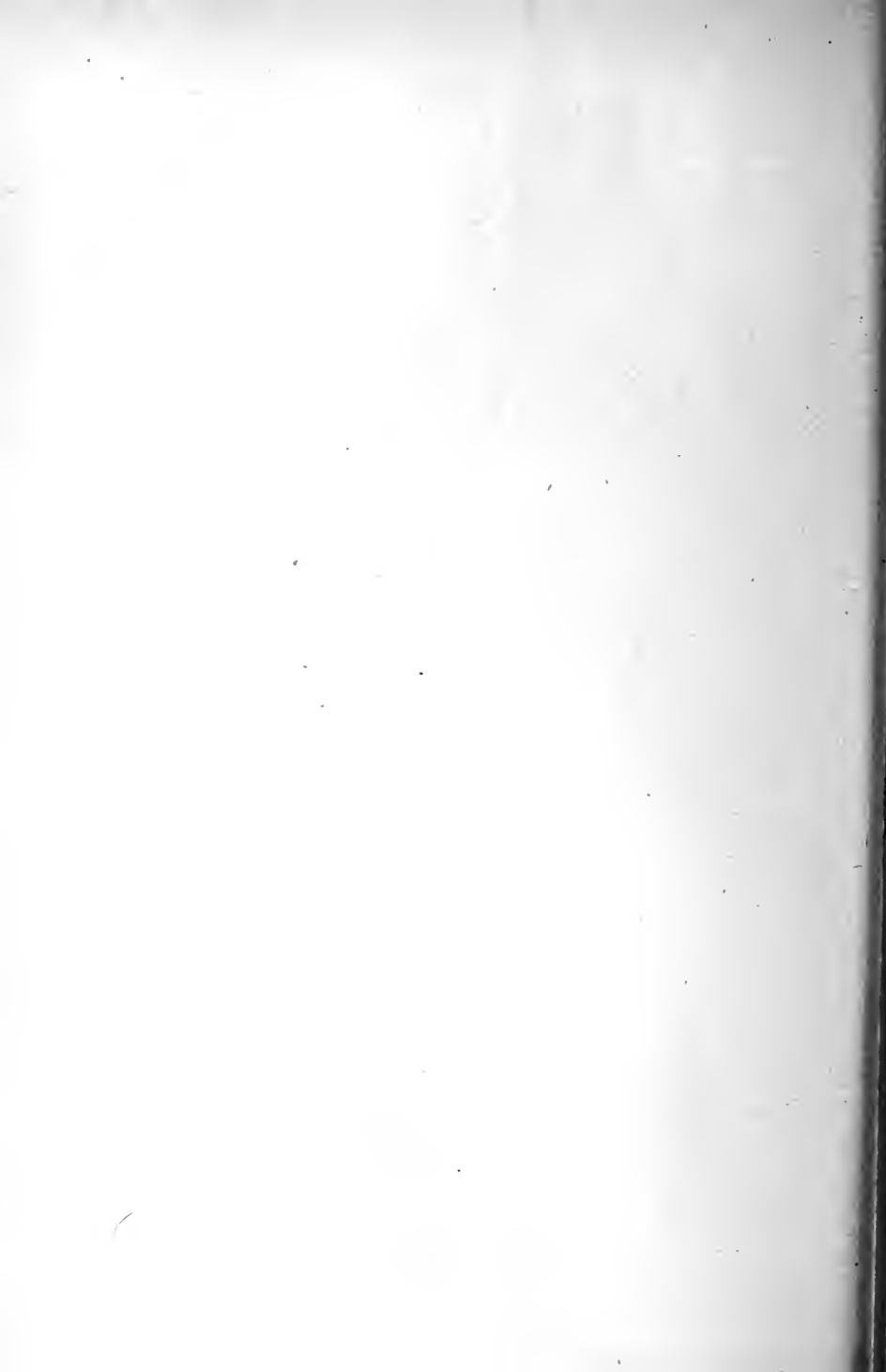
Bourchier was an admirable Hotspur, a performance which he never surpassed at Oxford. Mr. Clement Scott in the *Daily Telegraph* at the time speaks in very high terms of his acting; while he says of Mackinnon, who played Prince Hal, that "it was one of the best and most creditable of the many good performances." E. H. Clarke, now of the Haymarket Theatre, made his first appearance in the O.U.D.S. in the double rôle of Glendower and a Carrier, and the Hon. Gilbert Coleridge made an excellent Falstaff: it would be absurd not to mention Henry IV. himself, which was played by E. Harrington, who looked every inch a king. Lady Edward Spencer Churchill was the Lady Mortimer, and sang a Welsh song very prettily, while Mrs. Quickly was played by Lady St. Leonards. Little more was done by the Society that year with the exception of a concert, which was given by them in the Holywell Music Rooms, which included a new operetta, specially written for Adderley, Mackinnon, and Bourchier, by W. Childe Pemberton.

The next event, and one of great importance, was the opening of the New Theatre by the O.U.D.S. with a performance of "Twelfth Night." It seems to have been almost as successful as "Henry IV.," and of course they were possessed of greater stage facilities. Bourchier played Feste, and E. H. Clarke, Malvolio. Mackinnon had now gone down from Oxford, and merely came up to witness the performance and walk on as a super. After "Twelfth Night" the Society was gradually allowed to dwindle down. There was nothing to keep it alive between the annual shows, and consequently members did not care to pay subscriptions; the club-rooms had to be given up, so there was literally no means of rallying the members together. It was consequently decided by Courtney,



MR. ALAN MACKINNON AS PRINCE HAL IN "KING
HENRY IV.," PART I.

From a photograph.



Bourchier, and Mackinnon, who came up on purpose to attend the meeting, that it was essential to produce a Greek play. There being no funds available, economy had to be considered, and it certainly cost less and drew more. A full description of the "Alcestis" has been separately treated at another part of the volume. I shall be content, therefore, with passing over it, with just the comment that it resulted in a profit of £200. I came up to Oxford this term, and was offered the part of Hercules, which, however, I declined for two reasons, one that I am not exactly the build for a Hercules, and the other, that I preferred other pursuits to learning Greek. The year between the "Alcestis" and the production of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" was the most prosperous that the Club ever had. Tupper Carey of Christ Church, the Hon. Secretary, Greenwood of Christ Church, and one or two others, were most indefatigable in enrolling new members, and smoking concerts were given in various rooms, which not only kept the members continually meeting, but enabled newly-joined recruits to give a sample of their ability. Mackinnon consented to stay up all that term to give his assistance and advice, and he brought in some very important changes in the external working of the Club. They allowed the office of President, which had only been a figure-head, to drop out, and made the Secretary the principal officer, with this important proviso, that the Secretary should never be a Don. Also, it was settled that the stage-manager should cease to be a regular member of the Committee, but should only be elected for the purpose of producing a play, and be then *ex-officio* member of the Committee. The Hon. R. Scott-Montagu was elected Secretary, but very shortly resigned, and the Hon John Scott-Montagu (now M.P. for the New Forest) stepped into his place. With a pleasant

and hard-working committee, and money in hand, the way seemed quite clear for a successful production of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," which took place on May 28th and the six following days. Mackinnon as usual was responsible for the stage management; with money to spend on the production, it was far more elaborate and worthy of the Society than any of its predecessors. The Dell of Windsor Forest, with three cascades of real water, shrubs, &c., and the stage broken up into rocky plateaux of different elevations, with Herne's Oak overshadowing the whole, was quite a new effect in Oxford. Bouchier was an excellent Falstaff, and Morris's rendering of the jealous Ford was one of the best things in the play; neither must the Dr. Caius of E. H. Clark and the Sir Hugh of M. F. Davies pass unnoticed. But the hit of the piece, from an audience point of view, was the Slender of my brother, E. F. Nugent, whose build and general appearance were created for the part. Mrs. Charles Sim made her first appearance for the O.U.D.S., and has since won many successes at Oxford. Mrs. Copleston was Mrs. Quickly; Lady Abingdon, Sweet Anne Page; and Mrs. Jameson, Mrs. Ford. Sullivan's music was very effectively rendered by a special orchestra under the direction of Lionel Monckton. The performance was certainly a good one, good enough to make Mr. Beerbohm Tree, who came specially to see it, ask for the prompt copy; but the expenses were heavy and the receipts not so good as usual, and it resulted in a serious deficit, and the Society was greatly hampered in arranging for the next production.

Lady Abingdon, who played Sweet Anne Page so charmingly, frequently entertained the members of the company at Whitham during the rehearsals, and Bouchier as Falstaff was the victim of a practical joke in the shape

of one of the old family chairs in the hall at Whitham. This chair when sat on promptly shut the occupant in, and there was no way of getting rid of the chair except the occupant touched a certain spring.

On one fell night this Whitham chair was cruelly substituted for Falstaff's usual seat—result, imprisonment of Falstaff, terrible language, and ringing down of the curtain in the middle of the scene to extricate him from his sorry plight. The next day Bouchier was the recipient of a number of letters sarcastically asking his authority for certain words used on the previous evening not to be found in any of the folios, quartos, or early editions of "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

On the resignation of the Hon. J. Scott-Montagu, A. E. Grahame became Secretary; but though he continually regally entertained us in his house in Brewer Street, he did not take much interest in the affairs of the Society; and as Mackinnon had gone down, declining to produce the new piece, and as Clark had also gone down, the work principally devolved upon me, with, of course, the invaluable assistance of Bouchier. The smoking concerts went on as usual, but the Society was lamentably weak in the point of view of actors. This made it very hard to determine what should be our next production. It was clear from the failure of "Merry Wives," in a pecuniary sense, that it would be politic to produce a tragedy. Eventually we agreed upon "Julius Cæsar," but I begged that Bouchier would consent to play Brutus, and wrote and asked E. H. Clark to come up and take the part of Cassius. This they both consented to do, and with Morris as Mark Antony and Grahame in the title rôle, we really had a very creditable cast. I played Casca, and Henry Irving, jun., was Decius

Brutus. But the chief feature of the show was the exquisite scenery, designed by Alma-Tadema, R.A., and executed by Hall. Some very charming music, composed and directed by Lionel Monckton, was also a great addition. It was produced by the late Stewart Dawson, and was a great artistic success, but, unfortunately, once more a considerable financial failure. The houses were nightly crammed, and the takings very considerable, but the expenses overbalanced the receipts, and if Sir Robert Peel had not come forward and most generously advanced us £80 for one bill alone, we should have had no balance at all. Grahame now went down from Oxford, and I was elected Secretary. In order to enrol fresh recruits we kept to the same policy of organising fortnightly smoking concerts, which were now on a much bigger scale than usual. They were held in the Clarendon Assembly Rooms, and each member was permitted to bring in two guests. This system of concerts proved an excellent tonic for the revival of the Club, and caused its numbers to considerably swell. At a private meeting of old members we thought it would be a bold, and perhaps a successful, step to make an effort to break through the original mandate of the Vice-Chancellor, and to apply for permission to produce Marlowe's "Jew of Malta." Rather to our surprise, but be it said chiefly through the intercession of W. L. Courtney, leave was granted; and Courtney set to work to revise it in such a manner as not to offend the moral sensibilities of an Oxford public. A. C. Swinburne kindly granted some matter relating to Marlowe, to be reprinted in the form of a preface, and everything was in preparation. I went down that term, and Henry Irving, jun., succeeded me.

In the winter of 1889 Robert Browning died, and

it was consequently decided to substitute "Strafford" for "The Jew of Malta." Dr. Bellamy, the Vice-Chancellor, gave his consent, and preparations were made for its production. "Strafford" had not been given (except by the Browning Society) since its production by Macready in 1837. The performances took place on February 12th to 18th, 1890, and Robert Barrett Browning was present with Dr. Jowett. Alma-Tadema, R.A. (as in "Cæsar"), designed the scenery.

The influenza was raging in Oxford at this time, which was most disastrous to the performance. The ill-luck of the unfortunate Charles I. pursued his representative; Hunt after the first night was seized, and had to give up his part, his understudy was taken ill at the same time, so once more the Club had to fall back on the ever-willing Mackinnon, who most kindly undertook the part at a moment's notice, and played till the last night, when he was also attacked, and actually a fourth understudy had to play on the closing night.

On Irving's resignation of the Secretaryship, owing to his reading, Amhurst Webber of New College succeeded; but he went down before the next production, and Lord Warkworth of Christ Church became the new Secretary.

On February 4th to 10th of 1891 an excellent performance was given of "King John." There was, however, such a paucity of efficient actors, that once more the Club had to have recourse to old members. Mackinnon played Faulconbridge, and Holman Clark, Hubert. Harry Irving was King John, and a little professional lady named Mabel Hoare played Prince Arthur. Clark designed the scenery, and the armour was lent from the Lyceum. The great feature of the performance was, however, Lady

Radnor's band of ladies, who played all the incidental music. One hitch occurred on the first night, which led to a story being told against myself. I had written a wedding march for the procession into the walls of Angiers ; but the drawbridge stuck, and the music had stopped long before the last soldier had entered. Mackinnon was left alone on the stage, and the first words that he uttered were, "Mad world, mad kings, *mad composition.*"

Soon after the performance of "King John" both Irving and Clark went on the stage.

In the following year a performance of "The Frogs" of Aristophanes, which is dealt with elsewhere in this volume.

In 1893 H. T. Whittaker of Christ Church was Secretary, and a most successful performance was given of "Two Gentlemen of Verona," in which Whittaker's Valentine, and A. Ponsonby's Launce, were the most notable features.

In 1894 A. Ellis of Trinity, Secretary, arranged for a performance of "The Tempest." The stage effects here were a very important feature, the Storm scene being particularly worthy of praise. F. C. Woods of Exeter was responsible for the music, and the Exeter Choir appeared as Spirits. Miss Bruckshaw, of the Royal College of Music, was the Ariel. Other good performances were those of R. G. Talbot as Prospero, A. Ellis as Trinculo, and L. Playfair as Stephano.

In August of the same year the University Extension had their Summer Meeting in Oxford. The period chosen for the lectures of the year was the seventeenth century, and the committee of the Oxford Extension wrote and asked Mackinnon to undertake a performance of "Strafford," to

illustrate a leading statesman of the period, which he undertook to do. H. Snagge of New College was then Secretary, and an arrangement was made for a picked company of past and present members of the O.U.D.S. to undertake a revival of the play. Thus ten years after the foundation of the O.U.D.S. a performance was given at the request of, at any rate, an authoritative body in the University.

The cast included :—

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Strafford. | . | . | . | . | . | . | ALAN MACKINNON. |
| Charles I. | . | . | . | . | . | . | A. ELLIS. |
| Pym | E. H. CLARK | (by permission of | Mr. H. BEERBOHM TREE). | | | | |
| Vane | . | . | . | . | . | . | H. T. WHITTAKER. |
| Denzil Hollis | . | . | . | . | . | . | H. CROKER KING. |
| Hampden | . | . | . | . | . | . | G. T. KIDSTONE. |
| Puritan | . | . | . | . | . | . | W. A. PHILLIPS. |

The ladies' parts were undertaken by Miss Behuke and Mrs. Charles Sim. The play passed off successfully, and a vote of thanks was passed by the Committee of the University Extension to the O.U.D.S. and to Mackinnon, who became the recipient of a portrait of "Strafford."

1895 was the last year in which Mackinnon had anything to do with the Club. He stage-managed a production of "The Merchant of Venice," which appears to have been a smooth, but not a very brilliant show. Ellis as Gratiano appears to have shone most, and next to him Hearn as Launcelot Gobbo. J. Comyns Carr, jun., made a good Antonio, and A. Bonnin a fair Shylock.

In 1896 (J. Hearn of Brazenose being Secretary) "The Merry Wives of Windsor" was revived. Hearn played Falstaff, and Croker King, Slender, Doctor Caius being played by Woodward. It was a fair, all-round show, but did not come up to the one of '88, Mrs. Copleston being

the only one of the original cast. About this time Paul Rubens of University College, a very promising musician, arranged all the smoking concerts.

An excellent performance was given in the following year of "The Knights," and that practically brings the history of the O.U.D.S. down to the present time. I have heard from the present Secretary, R. L. Oldershaw, and from L. E. Bernham, the Treasurer, that the affairs of the Club are in a most flourishing condition. A new clubhouse has been erected in George Street, quite close to the theatre, which is fitted up with every luxury, and that the same enthusiasm prevails amongst the present members as did in the old days.

"God speed ye, merry gentlemen."

NOTE.—I should like to make the following acknowledgments :—To Mr. W. L. Courtney for allowing certain matter to be reprinted from an article of his entitled "Oxford Revels"; to the Hon. and Rev. J. G. Adderley and Mr. Alan Mackinnon for lending me their records; to Mr. Arthur Bouchier for much valuable assistance, and to many others for their kind suggestions and advice.

IX

ACTING AT ETON

By F. TARVER

I HAVE been requested by the editor of this book to write a chapter on "Etonian Amateur Theatricals," I suppose for two reasons: First, because I am one of the few living Etonians whose memory carries them back to early in the forties, a time when "Theatricals" were at their best in Long Chamber, and also because from the time when I returned to Eton as a master in 1864 till the abolition of all such public or private performances in the school in 1870 I had, at the request of the boys themselves, "coached" nearly all the Fourth of June speeches, and managed, and occasionally taken part in, some of the plays which were acted in private houses, and in all of those which were performed in the Mathematical School, to which the whole school were admitted by batches. To begin then at the beginning, and to go back to the time previous to that in which my own memory serves me, I have been informed by a friend, who had it from the lips of the Rev. J. Wilder (who died in the year 1892 at the advanced age of ninety-one), that he, John Wilder, had acted the part of Lydia Languish when a boy at Eton, and that the theatre was a barn a little way out of Eton, probably at Dutchman's Farm, near Willowbrook, and that the boys who played the ladies' parts went out in sedan chairs, one of which was once stopped by a master, who

apologised profusely to the supposed lady occupant and let it pass. And in the "Reminiscences of Eton, Keate's time," by the Rev. C. Allix Wilkinson, we read that "there was at that time a regular theatre, with permanent scenery, at Barney Levi's large room, about halfway 'up-town,' conducted by a joint troupe of Collegers and oppidans, and patronised by ladies from Windsor, 'dames' and their friends from Eton and the environs, and if not by masters' wives, certainly by their daughters." I have also been told, on the best authority, that Dr. Goodford, for some time Head Master and afterwards Provost of Eton College, had in his schooldays acted the parts of Mrs. Malaprop in the "Rivals" and of Distaffina in "Bombastes Furioso."

The first authenticated account that I can find of acting in Long Chamber is in the extracts from the letters and journals of William Cory (better known to Etonians by his former name of William Johnson), lately printed for private circulation.

"*Eton, May 14, 1838.*—Last night we began our theatrical season with 'The Original' and 'The Sleep Walker,' two tolerable farces, acted in the best possible style, as far as the great characters, and got up in scenery, &c., very neatly and cleverly, especially considering our limited funds, about £7 odd. The theatre is erected in Long Chamber, in front of two small chambers where they dress; there are six scenes to last the season, and curtains, &c., with beds turned up as walls. Beds, too, were our galleries, some turned on their sides, some perpendicular, with 'boxes' of chairs for the 'Sixth Form' and 'Liberty,' and for two or three visitors, one of whom was our musician, whistling very excellently to the accompaniment of a wretched guitar, and singing occasionally. The three

good actors were Westmacott¹ (the manager), Bullock, and Tarver,² all sextiles (Sixth Form)."

I may now begin to draw on my own memory and recount my own experiences of the performances in "Long Chamber," and as the room so called ceased to exist as such about the year 1845, many still living who may fairly style themselves "Old Etonians" can never have seen it in its pristine state. It was the long dormitory on the first floor of the building which forms the northern side of "School yard." In it slept the first fifty of the seventy King's Scholars, on strong oak bedsteads, of which we shall have more to say soon. The original walls still exist, but the interior has now been divided up into twenty separate cubicles for the last twenty boys in College, three or four studies of "Sixth Form" boys, and the apartments for the "Master in College." Before 1845 this functionary did not exist, and we were left entirely to the control of the "Sixth Form."

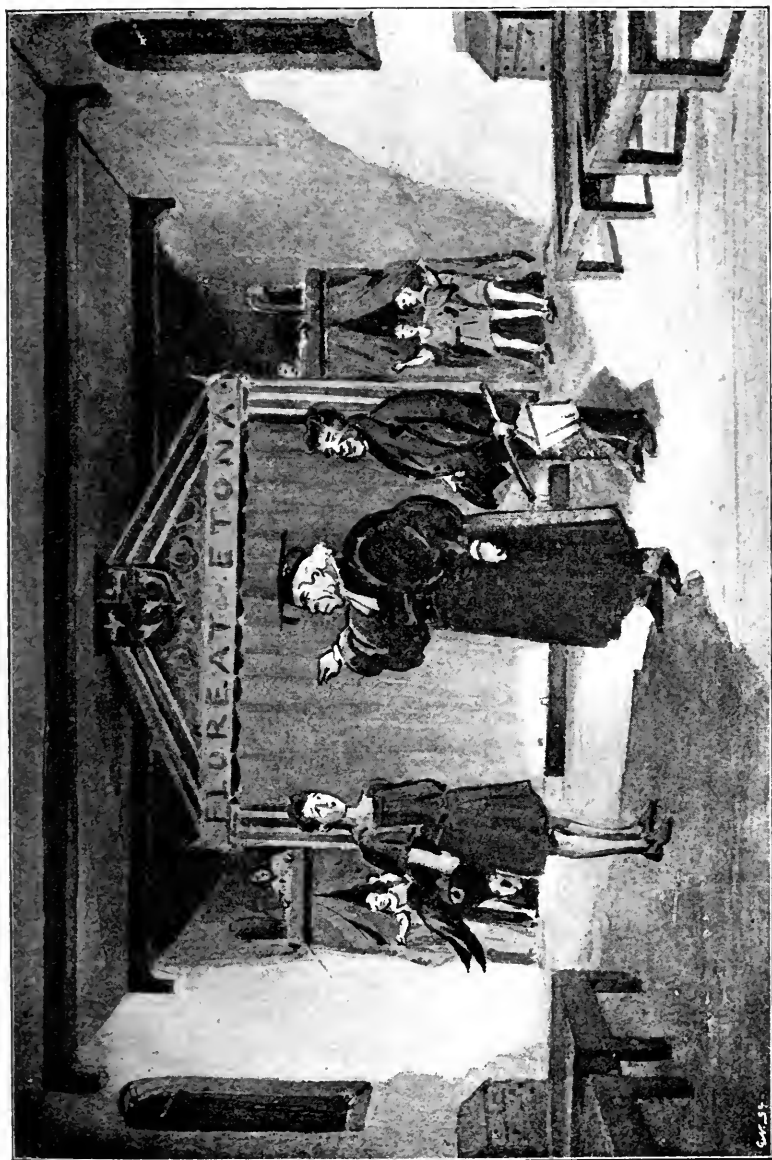
It is true that we did receive occasional nocturnal visits from the kind-hearted headmaster, Dr. Hawtrey, but these visits were always heralded by a loud rapping on the door from the stick of his trusty henchman "Finmore," so as to give ample time for the steaks, sausages, &c., which we were cooking for our suppers, to be thrust under the beds; but Hawtrey, knowing full well how scanty was the fare provided for us at the "Hall" supper, always pretended not to smell the delicious odour of these contraband viands. I have spoken of the oak bedsteads in which we slept, because these and the rugs which covered us (literally "horse-rugs," and those not of the best) were the materials with which we formed the framework of our stage. The bedsteads were of very strong oak, and about six feet long, so that two of them raised on end, and one

¹ Some time Professor of Elocution at Oxford.

² My elder brother and Canon of Chester.

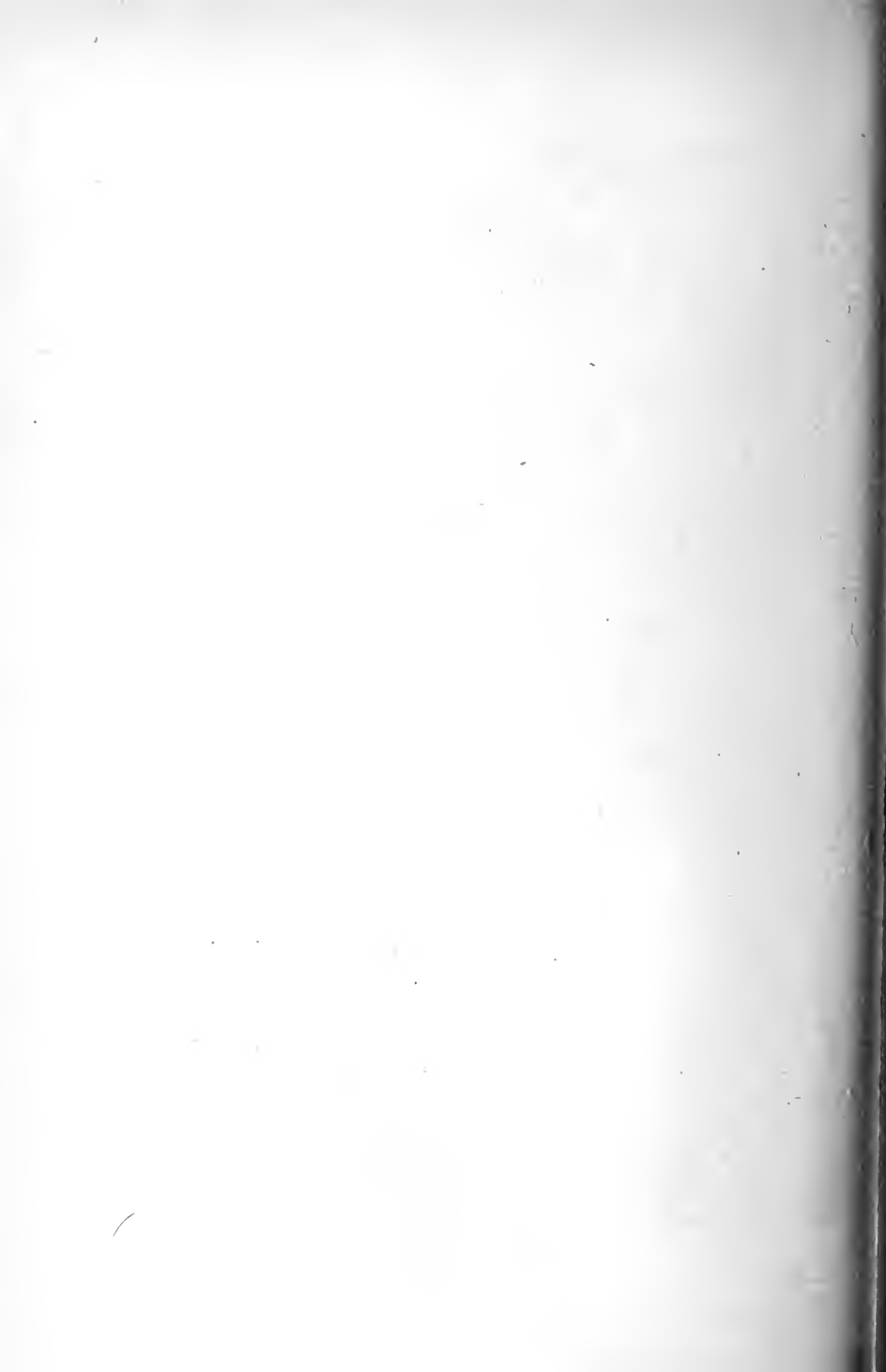
on the top of the other, strongly roped together, joined to as many more as were requisite to form the sides and back of the stage, really made an excellent framework, an unlimited amount of rugs forming a substantial, if not elegant, drapery for sides, exits, &c. &c. For the proscenium we had of course to enlist the services of some carpenter and upholsterer from the town, and Mr. Evans, the drawing-master, and distinguished member of the old Water-Colour Society, would occasionally lend a helping hand, and indeed on one occasion furnished a very spirited picture of Tilbury Fort ("very fine indeed") for the back scene of the "Critic," which picture remained for a long time after the breaking up of Long Chamber into separate cubicles on the western wall of that building. The building of the stage was of course a matter of two or three days or nights, and if during this preparatory time dear old Hawtrey did pay us one of his occasional visits, he would turn upon the gaps in the line of bedsteads much such an eye as did Nelson on the famous signal at Copenhagen. If the stage were fully "set," and the proscenium footlights in their places, he would do no more than shrewdly remark, "Oh! I see what you are about" (as well he might, having been an old "Colleger" himself), and sending for the Captain, exact from him a promise that all should be carried on with due order and decency.

The first play that I can recollect seeing acted in Long Chamber was "The Critic." Not yet being a "Colleger," I had been smuggled in by one of my brothers. Walter Long, brother to the late Vice-Provost of King's, and to the late Mayor of Windsor (Sir G. Long), acted Puff; and I was told, though I was not of an age to judge for myself, that his performance of the part was as good as, if not better than, that of C. Mathews! But when did not school-boys think themselves better than professionals? About



DR. HAWTREY DISCOVERING PREPARATIONS FOR "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM," IN THE LONG CHAMBER, ETON.

By C. M. Newton, from a water-colour by F. Tarver.



that time too, "Anson," a very big Colleger, compared with whom, in the eyes of us small boys, Goliath was a pigmy and Samson a stripling, had actually carried, or hauled, a donkey up the stairs into Long Chamber, which donkey was stabled and fed in one of the studies until such times as he should be wanted for General Bombastes to ride him triumphantly into the presence of King Artaxominous and Fusbos. In my own time we had a very creditable performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in which Arthur Browning (an elder brother of Mr. Oscar Browning) took the part of Oberon, my brother "Joe" that of Bottom, Arthur Coleridge, Mustard Seed (singing all the songs), and myself Puck. The music was very well and carefully got up and executed.

This was followed by a very amusing piece written in verse by a Colleger of the name of King, entitled "A Night in China," introducing our Plenipotentiary there, Sir H. Pottinger, whose dealings with the Chinese about that time excited as much interest as has attended the recent action of Russia, Germany, France, and England in that country. This was the last play acted in Long Chamber, which, as I have said before, "ceased to be" in the year 1845; but the tradition still clung to us survivors, and we burned to emulate the noble deeds of our predecessors, and in the month of April 1846 Arthur Coleridge and myself rented what was known as "Turnock's Room" in the High Street ("Turnock" was a small tailor, and behind his shop was a large room occasionally used for concerts, recitations, lectures, &c.). We there acted the three plays of which I append the casts. The programme, or bill of the play, which has been religiously preserved, and lent to me for insertion here by Mr. Coleridge, was considered by our audience, but more especially by ourselves, the compilers, as humorous in the extreme:—

THEATRE ROYAL

(TURNOCK'S ROOM).

Managers—Mr. A. D. COLERIDGE and Mr. F. TARVER.

MONDAY and TUESDAY EVENINGS, 10TH and 11TH APRIL 1846,

Will be performed, with entirely New Scenery, Dresses, and
Accoutrements, by Her Majesty's Servants,

Mr. BARNARDO'S Admired Farce of

"HIS LAST LEGS."

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. Rivers . . . | (<i>A Credulous Old Gentleman</i>) | Mr. JOCK BIDWELL. |
| Mr. C. Rivers . . . | (<i>An Amatory Youth</i>) . . . | Mr. H. CHEALES. |
| (His first appearance at this Theatre.) | | |
| Dr. Banks . . . | (<i>15 Rue de la Victoire, Paris</i>) . . . | Mr. F. STACEY. |
| Mr. O'Callaghan . . . | (<i>A Gent on his Last Legs</i>) | Mr. A. D. COLERIDGE. |
| John . . . | (<i>Re-engaged by the Managers at immense expense</i>) | Mr. COKE. |
| Mrs. Montague . . . | (<i>A Blooming Vidder</i>) . . . | Mr. F. TARVER. |
| Miss Banks . . . | (<i>The Purest of her Sex</i>) . . . | Mr. H. STILL. |
| Betty . . . | (<i>Could you have a better?</i>) . . . | Mr. H. YONGE. |

An Overture by Signor JOEL'S Band,

After which will be performed the laughable Burlesque of

"BOMBASTES FURIOSO."

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Artaxominous . . . | (<i>King of Utopia</i>) . . . | Mr. H. CHEALES. |
| Bombastes . . . | (<i>His much-loved General</i>) . . . | Mr. F. TARVER. |
| Fusbos . . . | (<i>A Minister of State</i>) | Mr. A. D. COLERIDGE. |
| Distaffina . . . | | Mr. H. STILL. |

The Performance to conclude (or begin, we can't say which) with the
Farce of

"BOX AND COX."

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Box | (<i>A Journeyman Printer</i>) . . . | Mr. F. TARVER. |
| Cox | (<i>A Hatter</i>) . . . | Mr. A. D. COLERIDGE. |
| Mr. Bouncer . . . | (<i>Wait till you see her</i>) . . . | Mr. WAYTE. ¹ |

The Managers are happy to state that they have been able to engage
the valuable services of Signor COKO² JOEL'S Band.

Doors open at half-past 2. Performance to commence at 4 precisely.

Scenery and Decorations by Mr. F. TARVER.

*Vivat Regina!**Floreat Etona!*¹ For some time Assistant-Master at Eton College, afterwards Professor of Greek at London University. Died, after a long illness, in May of this year.² Jack Joel, who may still be seen with a straw hat and light blue ribbon, any summer's day in Upper Club.

This concludes the account of Eton theatricals in the "forties," and now a long interval elapses before their resumption. During my residence at Oxford, and the year or two which I spent at Eton after taking my degree, I cannot remember any performances taking place; and although I cannot speak from personal experience of the ten years between 1854 and 1864, when I was very little in England and hardly ever at Eton, I have taken great pains to ascertain from men who were either boys at Eton or masters during that period whether any, and, if any, what performances, did take place, and I cannot find out that there were any between the years 1850 and 1860; but thanks to the kindness of Mr. Arthur M. Heathcote, well known in London for his dramatic recitations, but especially as the author of "The Duchess of Bayswater" and other plays, who has supplied me with much valuable information, I shall be able to give an account of the plays which were acted between that date and the year 1864, when I came back to Eton as a master, and when I can again draw on my own personal memory. I must also record my indebtedness to Mr. William C. Higgins, of cricketing celebrity, who has kindly placed at my disposal a complete set of the *Eton Chronicle* from May 1863 till the end of 1869, which not only supplies information with regard to the year 1863, but enables me to supplement whatever may have escaped my memory in the subsequent years.

To begin then with the year 1862. Mr. Heathcote tells me that he and another small Lower boy (B. Tunnard) actually had the audacity one night after prayers to approach their tutor, the Rev. W. A. Carter (now Fellow and Bursar of Eton College), with the bold request that they might "get up a humble farce and perform it in Pupil room." Mr. Bumble, when Oliver Twist "asked

for more," could not have been more taken aback than was Mr. Carter ; however, not only did he consent "to think about it," but actually said a few days later that, if they could get the head boys in the house to take it up and do a good play, he would ask his friends to see it. The result was a performance of "She Stoops to Conquer," of which Mr. Heathcote has supplied me with the programme :—

Under the Patronage of the Rev. W. A. and Mrs. CARTER.

THIS EVENING ONLY, THURSDAY, 31st JULY 1862,

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER."

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sir Charles Marlow | Mr. H. HOWARD. |
| Hardcastle | Mr. C. COTES. |
| Young Marlow | Mr. H. ROMILLY. |
| Hastings | Mr. W. BARING. |
| Tony Lumpkins | Mr. C. HEATHCOTE. |
| Stingo } | Hon. E. BOSCAWEN. |
| Jeremy } | |
| Diggory | Mr. B. TUNNARD. |
| Ralph | Lord SUIRDALE. |
| Roger | Hon. H. BOSCAWEN. |
| Mrs. Hardcastle | Mr. L. PALK. |
| Miss Hardcastle | Mr. A. HEATHCOTE. |
| Miss Neville | Hon. W. VERNEY. |
| Maid | Hon. H. BOSCAWEN. |
| Orchestra—Piano. | Performers { Mr. H. LEE WARNER. |
| | Mr. C. C. W. SIBTHORP. |

The next year Mr. Carter's pupils acted the "Rivals," with the following cast :—

THURSDAY, 30th JULY 1863.

"THE RIVALS."

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sir A. Absolute | Mr. C. COTES. |
| Captain Absolute | Mr. H. ROMILLY. |
| Faulkland | Mr. C. E. JARVIS. |
| Bob Acres | Hon. R. G. MOLYNEUX. |
| Sir Lucius O'Trigger | Lord SUIRDALE. |
| Fag | Mr. W. E. BALSTON. |
| David | Mr. J. W. MONTRESOR. |
| Coachman | Mr. H. P. POWELL. |
| Mrs. Malaprop | Mr. E. D. HEATHCOTE. |
| Lydia Languish | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |
| Julia | Mr. C. A. HOPWOOD. |
| Lucy | Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL. |

And here I will quote a few of Mr. Heathcote's observations as to this performance: "Lord Randolph Churchill made a first-rate Lucy; and my brother Evelyn, who was not an Etonian, came, at Carter's invitation, to act Mrs. Malaprop and supply Palk's place, who was taken ill in the middle of the rehearsals.

"The next year," Mr. Heathcote goes on to say, "Carter relaxed his rule as to the play being 'a classic,' and I have no doubt the audience suffered, for we attempted 'A Scrap of Paper,' with the following cast:—

27th JULY 1864.

The Performance will commence at 7 o'clock with the popular
Comedy in three Acts, entitled

"A SCRAP OF PAPER."

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Prosper Couramont | Mr. H. ROMILLY. |
| Baron de la Glacière | Mr. W. SCHOLFIELD. |
| Brisemouche | Mr. E. D. HEATHCOTE. |
| Baptiste | Mr. R. W. POWELL. |
| Anatole | Lord SUIRDALE. |
| Louise de la Glacière | Lord R. CHURCHILL. |
| Mme. Suzanne de Ruseville | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |
| Mathilde | Mr. A. ROMILLY. |
| Mme. Zénobie } | Hon. R. G. MOLYNEUX. |
| Mme. Dupont } | |
| Pauline | Mr. W. CARTER. |

To conclude with the screaming Farce of

"WHITEBAIT AT GREENWICH."

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. Benjamin Buzzard | Mr. E. D. HEATHCOTE. |
| Mr. Glimmer | Lord SUIRDALE. |
| John Small | Mr. H. ROMILLY. |
| Miss Lucretia Buzzard | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |
| Sally | Lord R. CHURCHILL. |

About this performance Mr. Heathcote remarks : " My chief remembrance is of the difficulty of getting Randolph Churchill to rehearse or do anything he was wanted to do. He was both too clever and too fly-away to submit to a boy stage-manager ; and to this day I remember the agonies he caused us, especially with a collection of real butterflies lent us for the Curio scene, which he sent flying over the place, and left me to pick up as best I could during Suzanne's soliloquy."

Soon after this Mr. Carter was made a Fellow, and his house was broken up ; but before following Mr. Heathcote to the scene of his future triumphs at the Rev. E. Stone's, I will quote from the *Eton Chronicle* the following short notice of a performance at Mr. Vidals' :—

" Private Theatricals at Rev. F. Vidals', 18th and 19th November 1863. The first piece was ' Cool as a Cucumber,' and this was followed by a burlesque, entitled ' Ill Treated Il Trovatore ; or, The Mother, The Maiden, and The Musicianer.' We understand that the scenery, dresses, &c., were hired from London. Dawson and Hon. J. Henley distinguished themselves in the farce as Plumper and Old Barkins. The Hon. E. H. Primrose, Hon. F. Henley, and Dawson acted especially well in the several characters of Azucena, Count de Luna, and Marica. The other parts were sustained by the Earl of Ranfurly, Hon. J. Wodehouse, Irving, and Hartopp."

The same authority, the *Chronicle*, informs us that on the Tuesday evening, March 14, 1864, " Molière's play of ' Les Précieuses Ridicules ' was acted in Mr. Tarver's¹

¹ My brother, Mr. H. Tarver, then sole French master at Eton.

Pupil room before a select company." The principal characters were :—

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------|
| Du Croisy } | | | | | | { Mr. WELLS. |
| La Grange } | | | | | | { Mr. JONES. |
| Gorgibus . . . | | (<i>Rejected Lovers</i>) | | | | Mr. DAWSON. |
| Mascarille . . . | | (<i>A Worthy Citizen</i>) | | | | Mr. GREY. |
| Jodelet . . . | | (<i>La Grange's Valet</i>) | | | | Mr. FERGUSON. |
| Madelon . . . | | (<i>Du Croisy's Valet</i>) | | | | Hon. J. WODEHOUSE. |
| Cathos . . . | | (<i>Gorgibus's Daughter</i>) | | | | Hon. J. HENLEY. |
| | | (<i>Gorgibus's Niece</i>) | | | | |

This was followed by "Little Toddlekins," in which the same actors took part (with the addition of Holland and Hon. E. Primrose), and in which Ferguson's acting of the Old Maid received "enthusiastic applause."

On the following evening, March 15th, the same "company" (again in Mr. Tarver's room) played "The Adventures of a Love Letter" and "Little Toddlekins," and this time Mr. Grey seems to have shared the honours with Ferguson.

In September 1864 I came back to Eton as a master, and before the end of that "half" I was requested by the Collegers to assist them in getting up some plays to be acted in the College Hall. The entertainment began with a "vocal concert" of considerable merit, conducted by Mr. H. Barnby (brother of Sir J. Barnby, late organist at Eton College), of which I need not give the programme. This was preceded by a very clever prologue, spoken by E. Symonds and W. Durnford, and followed by the two plays of which I append the casts.

In the College Hall on Thursday evening, December 15, 1864 :—

AMATEUR ACTING

PART II.

AMATEUR THEATRICALS.

"THE SENTINEL,"

A MUSICAL BURLETTA, IN ONE ACT,

BY

J. MADDISON MORTON.

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Frederic William | . (King of Prussia) | . A. J. POUND |
| Frederic | . { (His Son, afterwards) Frederic the Great } | . A. G. TINDAL. |
| Baron Vonderbushel | | . W. DURNFORD. |
| Schloppsen | . (The Sentinel) | . R. C. B. WILLIS. |
| Corporal | | . J. W. FOLEY. |
| Linda | . (Schloppsen's Intended) | . W. H. POLLOCK. |
| Officers, Soldiers, &c., &c. | | |

An Interval of Ten Minutes.

To conclude with the celebrated Farce by J. M. MORTON,

"A REGULAR FIX."

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Hugh de Brass | | E. SYMONDS. |
| Mr. Surplus | . (A Lawyer) | . A. J. POUND. |
| Mr. Charles Surplus | (His Nephew) | . C. H. EVERARD. |
| Abel Quick | . (Clerk to Surplus) | . H. A. MACNAGHTON. |
| Smiler | . (A Sheriff's Officer) | . J. W. FOLEY. |
| Mrs. Surplus | | E. R. PHELPS. |
| Emily | | W. H. POLLOCK. |
| Deborah Carter | (Housekeeper to Mrs. Surplus) | . W. DURNFORD. |
| Matilda Jane | . (Housemaid) | . F. T. DOWDING. |

The Costumes by Messrs. NATHAN, 24 Tichbourne Street.

"DULCE DOMUM" AND "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN,"

In which the Audience are requested to join.

The acting was really very good. The boys had chosen for themselves "A Regular Fix," mainly, I think, to bring out the comic powers of E. Symonds, which were really quite remarkable. W. Durnford's "get up" as Deborah Carter was also inimitable. They adopted "The

Sentinel" at my suggestion. I had myself acted in it some years before in Hamilton Palace, and it proved, as I hoped it would, "a success," with a good soldier's chorus, good songs by Schloppsen and Linda, thrilling beats of the drum to herald the King's approaches and exits, &c. &c. I should mention that the whole of the expenses of this entertainment were defrayed by the then Head Master, the Rev. Dr. Balston.

Some little time before this performance in "Hall" there had been one at Mr. Stone's under the direction of Mr. A. M. Heathcote, who had "gone on" to that house when Mr. Carter became a Fellow. I quote from the *Eton Chronicle* of 15th December 1864: "The first piece was a farce, entitled 'A. S. S.', in which Mr. Heathcote was exceedingly good as Anthony Sniggles. This was followed by 'Boots at the Swan,' in which Mr. F. H. Wilson sustained the difficult part of Jacob Earwig with great success. Mr. Heathcote made another hit as Cecilia Moonshine; the performance ended with the farce of 'Ici on Parle Français,' in which the Hon. R. Molyneux as Victor Dubois and Mr. Heathcote as Anna Maria were particularly successful; Mr. Trower and Mr. F. H. Wilson were also frequently applauded." Mr. Heathcote has kindly furnished me with the complete "bill of the play," which follows:—

AT REV. E. D. STONE'S ON MONDAY, 5TH DECEMBER 1864,

Will be performed

"A. S. S."

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------|
| Mr. Diogenes Hunter | . | . | . | . | . | Mr. F. H. WILSON. |
| Anthony Sniggles | . | . | . | . | . | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |
| Adolphus | . | . | . | . | . | Mr. A. TROWER. |
| Mrs. Hunter | . | . | . | . | . | Mr. R. H. THURLOW. |
| Sophia | . | . | . | . | . | Hon. R. G. MOLYNEUX. |

AMATEUR ACTING

After which

"BOOTS AT THE SWAN."

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. Henry Higgins | Mr. H. A. DANNIEL. |
| Mr. Frank Friskley | Mr. A. TROWER. |
| Jacob Earwig | Mr. F. H. WILSON. |
| Peter Pippin | Hon. R. G. MOLYNEUX. |
| Miss Cecilia Moonshine | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |
| Miss Emily Trevor | Mr. T. P. WILSON. |
| Sally Smith | Mr. R. H. THURLOW. |

To conclude with

"ICI ON PARLE FRANÇAIS."

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Major Regulus Rattan | Mr. F. H. WILSON. |
| Victor Dubois | Hon. R. G. MOLYNEUX. |
| Mr. Spriggins | Mr. A. TROWER. |
| Mrs. Spriggins | Mr. R. H. THURLOW. |
| Angelina | Mr. T. P. WILSON. |
| Julia Rattan | Mr. H. A. DANNIEL. |
| Anna Maria | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |

I am also indebted to Mr. Heathcote and to Mr. J. Sturgis for the following casts of plays acted in the same year at Mr. Browning's and Miss Evan's, about which the *Eton Chronicle* gives no information.

AT MISS EVANS'S, ON MONDAY, 12th DECEMBER 1864,

Will be performed

"B. B."

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Squire Greenfield | Mr. J. D. MANSEL. |
| Bob Rattler | Mr. J. M. CARR LLOYD. |
| Joe | Mr. H. RICARDO. |
| Mr. Benjamin Bobbin | Mr. F. A. CURREY. |
| Mr. Puncheon | Mr. W. O. MASSINGBERD. |
| Dorothy | Mr. G. GREENWOOD. |

After which

"WHITEBAIT AT GREENWICH."

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Mr. Benjamin Buzzard | Mr. W. H. ADY. |
| Mr. Glimmer | Mr. F. A. CURREY. |
| John Small | Mr. C. W. GREENWOOD. |
| Miss Lucretia Buzzard | Mr. W. O. MASSINGBERD. |
| Sally | Mr. G. GREENWOOD. |

And

AT MR. BROWNING'S, ON WEDNESDAY, 14th DECEMBER 1864,

Will be performed

"RAISING THE WIND."

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Plainway | J. RIGDON. |
| Fainwould | C. DEVAS. |
| Jeremy Diddler | W. BARRINGTON. |
| Sam | W. HAY. |
| Richard | E. PEARS. |
| Waiter | F. HODGSON. |
| John | S. ROPER. |
| Peggy | W. STANCOMBE. |
| Miss Laurelia | J. MURRAY. |

"POOR PILLICODDY."

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Pillicoddy | W. DEVAS. |
| Captain O'Scuttle | A. GOSLING. |
| Sarah Blunt | F. HODGSON. |
| Mrs. O'Scuttle | J. MURRAY. |
| Mrs. Pillicoddy | W. HAY. |

This concludes all the information I have been able to obtain about 1864, but in 1865 the dramatic "furore" seems to have been unabated, and the performances at various houses succeeded each other with great rapidity; but before proceeding to give the 1865 casts seriatim, I should like to quote again from a letter written to me by Mr. A. Heathcote:—

"I remember Stewart Dawson (who afterwards went on the stage, and died last year, 1897) telling me of their doing 'The Adventures of a Love Letter' (the other version of a 'Scrap of Paper') at his 'dame's,' but I am not sure what house he was in. A boy named Henley was very good in the chief lady's part. W. Johnson (afterwards W. Cory, see page 194) was the House Tutor, and undertook to prompt, but not having been to any re-

hearsals, and not knowing the play, he became so much interested in it that he read on, and when his services were required in Act I. he was found deeply immersed in Act III., and Dawson had to find his place for him before the play could proceed." I am all the more indebted to Mr. Heathcote for this anecdote, that, unless I am much mistaken, this was the same S. Dawson who sustained so admirably the part of Madame Jourdain in the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" when we acted that play before the whole school in 1869, of which full details will be given in due time and place.

To proceed, then, without further preamble to the year 1865, the first play I find recorded is—

AT STONE'S, ON TUESDAY, 4TH DECEMBER 1865,

Will be performed the Screaming Farce by J. MADDISON MORTON,

"THE TWO BONNYCASTLES."

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. Smuggins | Mr. F. H. WILSON. |
| Mr. John James Johnson | Mr. A. TROWER. |
| Mr. Bonnycastle | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |
| Mrs. Bonnycastle | Mr. R. H. THURLOW. |
| Helen | Mr. A. S. DANIELL. |
| Patty | Mr. H. A. CASE. |

To be followed by the Comedietta, in One Act, entitled

"NINE POINTS OF THE LAW."

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. Joseph Ironside. | Mr. F. H. WILSON. |
| Mr. Cunninghame | Mr. A. TROWER. |
| Mr. John Britton | Mr. G. THORNHILL. |
| Mr. Rodomont Rollingstone | Mr. R. H. THURLOW. |
| Mr. Smylie | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |
| Kate Mapleson | Mr. H. A. CASE. |
| Sarah-Jane | Mr. A. S. DANIELL. |

To conclude with the Domestic Drama by TOM TAYLOR,

"A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING."

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Colonel Percy Kirke | Mr. A. TROWER. |
| Colonel Lord Churchill | Mr. G. THORNHILL. |
| Jasper Carew | Mr. R. H. THURLOW. |
| Kester Chedzoy | Mr. F. H. WILSON. |
| Corporal Ilintoff | Mr. J. T. R. FUSSELL. |
| John Zoyland | Mr. H. A. CASE. |
| Anne Carew | Mr. A. M. HEATHCOTE. |
| Dame Carew | Mr. A. S. DANIELL. |
| Sybil Carew | Mr. F. H. W. THORNHILL. |
| Keziah Mapletoft | Mr. H. A. CASE. |

Then on December 12th, still in the same year, we have

AT BROWNING'S,

"TOM NODDY'S SECRET."

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Captain Ormond | Mr. BARRINGTON. |
| Tom Noddy | Mr. DEVAS. |
| Inkpen | Mr. HAY. |
| Mary | Mr. TABOR. |
| Gabrielle | Mr. MURRAY. |

This was followed by a short French play, of which the cast is not given, called "L'Histoire d'un Sou," in which I remember acting the principal (and only) male part, with the two Misses Browning as the "ladies."

The programme concluded with—

"DEAF AS A POST."

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Mr. Walton | Mr. ROPER. |
| Tristram Sappy | Mr. BARRINGTON. |
| Captain Templeton | Mr. C. DEVAS. |
| Crupper | Mr. DIVETT. |
| Gallop | Mr. PEARS. |
| Sophy Walton | Mr. LONGMAN. |
| Amy Templeton | Mr. STANCOMB. |
| Mrs. Plumpley | Mr. HAY. |
| Sally Maggs | Mr. HODGSON. |

On the next evenings, December 13th and 14th, were acted

AT MISS EVANS'S,
"SLASHER AND CRASHER."

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr. Benjamin Blowhard | Mr. J. M. CARR LLOYD. |
| Mr. Samson Slasher | Mr. F. A. CURREY. |
| Mr. Christopher Crasher | Mr. H. RICARDO. |
| Lieutenant Brown | Hon. ARTHUR LYTTTELTON. |
| Dinah | Mr. W. O. MASSINGBERD. |
| Rosa | Mr. G. O. TROWER. |

After which
"DONE ON BOTH SIDES."

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Mr. Brownjohn | Mr. G. GREENWOOD. |
| Mr. Whiffles | Mr. C. W. GREENWOOD. |
| Phibbs | Mr. JULIAN R. STURGIS. |
| Mrs. Whiffles | Mr. F. A. CURREY. |
| Lydia | Mr. F. C. RICARDO. |

To conclude with
"TICKLISH TIMES."

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sir William Ramsay | Mr. J. R. STURGIS. |
| Launcelot Griggs | Mr. C. W. GREENWOOD. |
| Bodkins | Mr. W. H. ADY. |
| Jansen | Mr. J. M. CARR LLOYD. |
| Mrs. Griggs | Mr. G. GREENWOOD. |
| Winifred | Mr. F. C. RICARDO. |
| Dot | Hon. ARTHUR LYTTTELTON. |

On the same evening, December 14, 1865, I helped to get up a little entertainment at Mr. (now Dr.) Warre's house for the amusement of his pupils, family, and a few friends, of which I give the programme verbatim :—

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1865,

"A CHARADE" in Three Acts.

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Box | Mr. F. TARVER. |
| Cox | Mr. T. H. M'CLINTOCK BUNBURY. ¹ |
| Mr. Bouncer | Mr. J. M'CLINTOCK BUNBURY. |

"BOMBASTES FURIOSO."

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Artaxominous | . | . | . | Mr. T. H. M ^c CLINTOCK | BUNBURY. |
| Fusbos | . | . | . | Mr. H. F. EATON. | |
| General Bombastes | . | . | . | Hon. B. LAWLEY. | |
| Distaffina | . | . | . | Mr. W. HIGGINS. ² | |
| Attendants, Courtiers, Army, &c. | | | | | |

My principal recollection of this performance is the stroke of genius which inspired the younger Bunbury (who died a few years ago) to express to Mr. Cox the hope that he slept "comfortable" (so pronounced).

The *Chronicle* records no theatricals in this year ; but Mr. J. Sturgis has told me that before Christmas in that year they performed at his "dame's" (Miss Evans) "A Comical Countess," in which he took the part of the Chevalier, and George Greenwood that of the Countess.

In the following year (1867) theatrical representations became so "fast and furious," that I must request any old Etonians who may do me the honour to read these pages, and may deem that scanty justice is being done to their performances (which, I have no doubt, they had every reason to believe to have been amongst the best produced at Eton), to excuse me if the limited space accorded to me prevents me doing more than to record the dates of such

¹ Now Lord Rathdonnell.

² Captain of the Eleven in 1868.

performances, titles of the plays, and names of the actors, without giving the full casts. I will take them in due order:—

1. *April* 3rd and 4th, at Rev. W. Wayte's: "Cool as a Cucumber" and "Whitebait at Greenwich." Performers: C. T. Campbell, J. P. Cunliffe, H. S. Ferguson, R. R. N. Ferguson, M. L. Macnaghten, E. S. Lucas, and Lord R. Graham.¹ I cannot remember which of the two Fergusons it was, but I can remember one "Ferguson at Wayte's" as being a first-rate actor.

2. *April* 8th and 9th, at Rev. C. C. James's: "Ticket-of-Leave Man," "Done on Both Sides," and "In the Pigskin." Performers: C. R. Alexander, E. F. Alexander, H. B. Walker, F. E. Temple, F. Newcome, T. H. Locke, F. J. Craven, W. C. Hemming, M. D. Jefferson, T. Wood, J. B. Doyne.

3. *April* 9th and 10th, at the Theatre Royal: "Old Christopher" (W. Johnson, Esq.), "An Affair of Honour," "A Peculiar Position," and "Turn Him Out." Performers: Hon. F. Henley, Lord Wodehouse, F. E. H. Elliot, H. G. Willink, Earl of Charleville, M. Francis, R. Russell, Hon. F. Finch-Hatton.

4. *April* 10th and 11th, at Miss Evans's: "My Wife's Maid," "Lend me Five Shillings," and "A Comical Countess." Performers: J. M. Carr Lloyd, G. Greenwood, F. A. Currey, H. Ricardo, Massingberd, F. C. Ricardo, Schuster, and J. R. Sturgis.

And now again Mr. Sturgis kindly supplements an omission in the *Chronicle*, and writes to me as follows:—"At Xmas, 1867, I did the Captain of the Watch in the play of that name. That must be the resplendent being whom you faintly remember. The other parts (for although I was then a great swell, in Sixth Form, and keeper of the field, I could not act them all) were played

¹ Now Duke of Montrose.

by F. A. Currey, Arthur Lyttelton (who ought to be a bishop by now), Schuster, a great musical amateur, and Howard,¹ then a new boy at my dame's."

On the 3rd December in the same year I remember witnessing an excellent performance by the small boys at the Rev. J. Hawtrey's, principally noticeable as being the first occasion upon which Charles H. Hawtrey appeared on any stage; and as the *Chronicle* is also silent as to this performance, I will quote Mr. C. H. Hawtrey's letter to me on the subject. The plays performed were "Ici on Parle Français" and "Bombastes Furioso." "All I remember of the performance is that George Tufton played the Frenchman, and Sir George Lowther, Spriggins (he also performed half the Army in 'Bombastes Furioso'). Bombastes, I well remember, was my brother William, the king was Wynne-Roberts-Wynne—he was a great big chap—the Army was Lonsdale, who was near six feet, and Spearman (Sir Joseph Spearman now), who was about three feet high, and could put his fist in his mouth, and I myself played Distaffina. I was eight years old, and it was my first appearance on any stage."

I can supplement Mr. Hawtrey's letter by recording the fact that C. F. Oliphant, son of Mrs. Oliphant the authoress, played the part of Fusbos. With this I conclude my notice of plays acted in private houses; but before proceeding to deal with those acted in public, and to which the whole school were admitted in batches, I will state as briefly as possible the reasons which led to their introduction. It had often occurred to me when witnessing the performances at the different "tutors'" and "dames'" houses, that it would be a very good thing if the always respectable, and sometimes really excellent

¹ His younger brother.

acting power exhibited by many of the boys could be combined in one "School theatrical company," and plays acted which the whole school might have an opportunity of seeing and hearing, for I had noticed that in addition to the "house" boys, numbering some thirty or forty spectators, only some ten or twenty outsiders could be admitted, and these were, naturally enough, the leading boys or "swells" of the school, members of the "eight" or "eleven," or of "Pop," whose privileged eyes and ears had all the enjoyment withheld from the *ignobile vulgus*; and to show that this idea of "generalising" the theatrical performances had occurred to the minds of the boys themselves, I will quote first from a letter addressed to the editor of *The Eton Chronicle* of October 27, 1864, signed "Ophelia": "Sir, it strikes me forcibly that the histrionic interests of the school are neglected. It is true that isolated houses perform plays, . . . but nothing at all equivalent to the world-renowned and never-to-be-forgotten celebrity of the 'Westminster Play,' an institution looked forward to by many every year. Let the Mathematical School be prepared for the purpose. Let a play worthy of the school and the occasion be enacted. Why should the school be content with broad farces and miserable comedies from the French? Let Etonians aim higher—Shakespeare is a worthy subject to try upon. Let present Etonians form a histrionic club, and on the boards of the Mathematical School act 'Hamlet,' or some such light and easy subject (!!)" And in the *Chronicle's* Leader of October 26, 1865, reference is made to this letter, and the idea contained therein endorsed and amplified, the editor concluding with these words: "If anything is to be done, it must be done quickly. Surely there is some one who has a turn for such things, and who would not mind the

trouble which it would involve to bring the matter to perfection. In supporting the idea of forming a company in the school, we certainly do not mean to cry down the theatricals in the houses, which are a great source of amusement to all those concerned in them."

It was, then, on finding my own ideas on the subject thus endorsed by what might be considered the organ of public opinion in the school, that I ventured to sound the Head Master on the subject, and readily obtained his permission to form a *School Company* and produce a *School play*; the only conditions being that, for educational purposes, one of the plays acted should always be a French classic, and that any English play produced should also be a "classic"; and the Mathematical School having been not only very kindly lent, but actually prepared for the purpose by the late Rev. S. Hawtrey, on the 12th December 1867 was produced Molière's play of "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," with the following cast:—

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monsieur Jourdain | Mr. F. TARVER. |
| Madame Jourdain | A. C. TUFTON. |
| Lucile | R. T. W. RITCHIE. |
| Cléonte | Hon. J. A. DE GREY. |
| Dorimène | Hon. H. S. FINCH-HATTON. |
| Dorante | Hon. M. E. FINCH-HATTON. |
| Nicole | H. G. WILLINK. |
| Covielle | R. RUSSELL. |
| Un Maître de Musique | Hon. J. A. DE GREY. |
| Un Maître à Danser | F. W. CORNISH, Esq. ¹ |
| Un Maître d'Armes | R. A. DOBREE. |
| Un Maître de Philosophie | W. H. TARVER, Esq. |
| Maître Tailleur | W. H. ONSLOW. ² |
| Deux Laquais et garçons Tailleurs | { Lord NAAS. F. T. DASHWOOD. |
| Le Grand Mufti | A. C. JAMES, Esq. |
| Dervis, Turcs, &c. &c. { | Messrs. J. CARTER, ONSLOW, DASHWOOD, CARTWRIGHT, MANGLES, AND J. C. TARVER. |

¹ Now Vice-Provost of Eton.

² Now Earl of Onslow.

Of the performance the *Chronicle* speaks in terms which it would ill become *me* to repeat, but I must record my own appreciations of the really admirable manner in which the boys (none of whom, with the exception perhaps of Tufton, had had any peculiar advantages of obtaining a correct French accent) performed the various parts assigned to them. For the incidental music, led by Mr. James, as the Grand Mufti, we did *not* employ that composed by Lulli for the delectation of "Le Grand Monarque," and which to modern ears would have had little charm, nor did we stoop to the "burlesque" airs of our own time, but with the assistance of Dr. Hayne, then Precentor and Musical Instructor, and of Mr. Cornish, we adapted well-known opera airs to the words that had to be sung in the "Ceremony," and so obtained a "great success." That the plays in private houses did not suffer from the introduction of a "School play," is evident from the fact that in the course of the same month (*i.e.* December 1867) there were performances at the Rev. C. C. James's on the 7th and 9th, at the Rev. W. Wayte's on the 10th, and at Miss Evans's on the 11th. I have not been able to obtain the casts of these two last-mentioned performances, but from the *Chronicle* I learn that at Mr. James's they acted "The Chimney Corner" (by H. T. Craven, Esq.) and "A Phenomenon in a Smock Frock," the various characters in these two plays being sustained by T. Wood, G. Blane, J. Lister Kaye, M. D. Jefferson, F. E. Temple, F. Newcome, H. B. Walker, R. D. Lane, and Doyne.

On December 10, 11, and 12, 1868, there were three performances in the Mathematical School, where the stage had been considerably enlarged by the removal of the two pillars in front. On December 10th the performance was "after four," and the Lower boys were admitted, and to the

two subsequent performances, on the evenings of December 11th and 12th, the whole of the rest of the school were admitted (in relays). At one of these H.R.H. Prince Leopold was present. The casts were as follows :—

“A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM.”

With Music by MENDELSSOHN.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Theseus | C. J. OTTAWAY. |
| Hippolyta | F. D. NEWCOME. |
| Lysander | F. H. RAWLINS. |
| Philostrate | C. W. BELL. |
| Oberon | H. B. WALKER. |
| Titania | H. A. TUFNELL. |
| Puck | C. F. OLIPHANT. |
| First Fairy | W. HAWTREY. |
| Second Fairy | J. H. BLAKESLEY. |
| Third Fairy | F. B. GREENWOOD. |
| Fourth Fairy | W. C. CARTWRIGHT. |
| Peas-blossom | S. G. MOON. |
| Cobweb | H. E. BOWMAN. |
| Moth | E. M. EYRE. |
| Mustard-seed | E. B. LAYARD. |
| Bottom (and Pyramus) | A. G. TINDAL. |
| Quince | Hon. F. PARKER. |
| Flute (and Thisbe) | S. R. MURRAY. |
| Snug (and Lion) | W. M. COMPTON. |
| Snout (and Wall) | F. CHURCHILL. |
| Starveling (and Moonshine) | M. L. MACNAGHTEN. |

This was followed by Molière’s play of

“LE MARIAGE FORCÉ.”

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sganarelle | F. TARVER, Esq. |
| Géronimo | EARL OF ELGIN. ¹ |
| Alcantor | H. T. HOPE. |
| Alcidas | R. A. DOBREE. |
| Panerace | W. H. TARVER, Esq. |
| Marphurius | W. H. ONSLOW. ² |
| Deux Egyptiennes | { H. EYRE. |
| Un Page | { W. CARTWRIGHT. |
| | Hon. C. HARBORD. |

¹ Viceroy of India, 1898.

² Earl of Onslow, formerly Governor of New Zealand.

The *Eton Chronicle* of December 15, 1868, gives a very flattering notice of the above performance, which want of space precludes the possibility of inserting here.

On Thursday, 9th December 1869, at 3.30 P.M., for the Lower boys, and on Monday and Tuesday, December 13th and 14th, at 7.30 P.M., for the rest of the school, the last of the school performances took place in the Mathematical School, as before. The plays selected were Sheridan's "Critic" and Molière's "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," with the following casts:—

"THE CRITIC."

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Puff | C. C. THORNTON. |
| Dangle | F. H. RAWLINS. |
| Sneer | E. F. ALEXANDER. |
| Sir F. Plagiary | F. A. CURREY. |
| Mrs. Dangle | R. RITCHIE. |
| Under Prompter | H. B. WALKER. |
| Whiskerandos | W. C. HIGGINS. |
| Earl of Leicester | B. T. S. COLERIDGE. ¹ |
| Sir C. Hatton | M. L. MACNAGHTEN. |
| Sir W. Raleigh | J. C. TARVER. |
| Governor | Hon. A. T. LYTTTELTON. |
| Beefeater | Hon. F. PARKER. |
| Lord Burleigh | E. H. BURROW. |
| Tilburina | C. A. WHITMORE. |
| Confidant | S. R. MURRAY. |
| First Niece | T. BAGOT. |
| Second Niece | Hon. H. TRACY. |
| First Sentinel | A. COURTHOPE. |
| Second Sentinel | E. F. R. GOULD. |

Followed by

"LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME,"

reduced to three Acts, and cast as follows:—

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Monsieur Jourdain | F. TARVER, Esq. |
| Madame Jourdain | S. E. DAWSON. |
| Lucile | G. R. TUFTON. |

¹ Son of the late Lord Chief-Justice, and now Lord Coleridge.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cléonte | H. WILLINK. |
| Nicole | C. F. OLIPHANT. |
| Covielle | Hon. F. PARKER. |
| Un Maître de Musique | H. A. PERRY. |
| Un Maître à Danser | F. W. CORNISH, ESQ. |
| Un Maître d'Armes | Hon. G. HARRIS. ¹ |
| Un Maître de Philosophie | H. TARVER, ESQ. |
| Un Maître Tailleur | R. RITCHIE. |
| Élève du Maître à Danser | E. CONANT. |
| First Laquais | S. DASHWOOD. |
| Second Laquais | W. C. HIGGINS. |

“CÉRÉMONIE TURQUE.”

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Le Grand Mufti | A. C. JAMES, Esq. |
| 1er Turc Chantant | S. R. MURRAY. |
| Dervis et Turcs Dansants } et Chantants . . . } | { Messrs. LYTTETON, DASHWOOD, HIGGINS, MACNAGHTEN, and ALEXANDER. |
| Deux Pages | T. BAGOT and Hon. H. HANBURY TRACY. |

For comments on the above performances I must again refer my readers to the *Eton Chronicle* of December 16, 1869.

This, then, concludes our chapter on Eton theatricals ; for although there may have been some subsequent clandestine performances in private houses, of which Mr. Arthur Bouchier may be able to tell us something, they practically ceased to be a “School institution” ; and indeed there may have been very good reasons for bringing them to a close, the principal one, to my thinking, being, that as the female parts were of a necessity generally assigned to younger boys, it brought them into a, perhaps to themselves, enviable but certainly undesirable prominence ; but that Eton theatricals have been productive of “some good,” I think we have sufficient proof in the success obtained on the London stage by such old Etonians as Charles Kean, the brothers Hawtrey, W. G. Elliot, A.

¹ Now Lord Harris, and formerly Under-Secretary for War, Under-Secretary for India, and Governor of Bombay.

Bourchier—*cum multis aliis*. And I cannot bring my chapter to a close without recording that some of the pleasantest hours I spent as an Eton master were those which I devoted to coaching for the Fourth of June speeches and the theatricals, which were amply rewarded by the most painstaking efforts on the part of my pupils, efforts which, if bestowed on the admirable instruction which I used to shower upon them in school hours, would have made them one and all perfect French scholars.

X

AMATEURS IN FOREIGN PARTS

By LIEUT.-COLONEL NEWNHAM-DAVIS

YOUR joker would say that amateur actors are constantly found in foreign parts at home. The foreign parts to which I am going to refer are, however, some of our great foreign possessions, and I will tell, as well as I can, of the amateur histrions who live and have their being in Asia and Africa, and of the important clubs which have grown up in some of the larger towns in the uttermost parts of the earth.

Simla, the summer capital of India, the town lying on a pine-covered horseshoe amidst the tumble of minor mountains that are the advance guard of the Himalayan snows, is the Mecca of amateur actors abroad, and the Simla Amateur Dramatic Club is probably the best equipped amateur club in the world. Its beginnings, however, were small enough. In the days after the Mutiny, when the Viceroy of the time first began to go yearly from Calcutta to Simla for the summer, there were theatricals at the Commander-in-Chief's house—for Lady Mansfield was very fond of the drama—and elsewhere ; but the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence, looked askance at theatricals, and the A.D.C., if indeed it existed then, had not received the impress of Viceregal favour which is necessary at Simla to make any amusement current.

It was not till the seventies and the palmy days of Lord Lytton that the Club gave promise of becoming the important factor in the gaieties of Simla that it is to-day.

The first Simla *Nautch Gurh*, as the natives call the theatre, was always spoken of as being "down the khud." It was a whitewashed barn of a place, a hundred yards or so down the hill, with the native bazaar in close proximity, owned by a Mr. Goad, who occupied the one box, and in the pride of ownership could look down upon the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief sitting in the stalls. "Plot and Passion" and the "Ticket-of-Leave Man," put on the stage in 1876, are two of the earliest plays that I can find trace of as having been played. In the former, Captain Morton, who has just completed his term as Adjutant-General in India, and who, by the way, is half-brother to the editor of this volume, played Fouché, a character with which his name became much associated, and Galbraith, the General who has been winning laurels in the Soudan, "Joey" Deane, C. Marshall, Arthur Prinsep, M'Call, nicknamed "Jackall," A. F. Liddell, all of whose names are or were household words in India, took parts. The "Ticket-of-Leave Man" was produced for the benefit of Rosa Cooper, a professional actress who had played with Phelps.

The next year (1877) brought forth an operetta which would have interested Mr. Frank Burnand and Sir Arthur Sullivan. It was a version of the "Contrabandista," with some very original dialogue. The words and music of the songs had fallen into the hands of the A.D.C., but no *libretto*. Val Prinsep, the artist, who was in India at the time to paint his great picture of the *Durbar*, came to the Club's aid, and with the songs to guide him wrote an original *libretto*, following the lines he thought the author

must have taken. The A.D.C. in this season (1877) produced an original comedy, "The Passing Cloud," by Val Prinsep, and their ranks were strengthened by the advent of the lady who now plays on the English stage under the *nom de théâtre* of Madame San Carolo. "Bwab" made an appearance in "Society," one of the plays produced during the year; and Lord "Bill" Beresford, who was to do so much later to aid the A.D.C., was the Irishman in the Owl's Roost scene.

These were the days that dwellers in Simla with long theatrical memories always talk of as the "Riddell and Liddell time." They were both young officers on the Viceregal staff then; now the former is the trusted business manager to the Kendals, the latter a light of the Stock Exchange, one of Her Majesty's Gentlemen-at-Arms, and a star of the yearly performances of the "Windsor Strollers"; and Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, encouraged theatricals unreservedly. The theatre was redecorated, three boxes built for the three great powers of Simla—the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab; and the season of 1878 commenced with the production of the first Lord Lytton's drama "Walpole," the rehearsals of which were superintended by the Viceroy. It is an old-fashioned play, dealing with Jacobite plots, and written in rhymed Alexandrine verse. Report says that some of the actors found the lengths of verse anything but easy matter to commit to memory; but then, a Viceregal stage-manager does not appear every day. This was not the only play produced under the direction of the Viceroy, for at Calcutta during one of the winter seasons "The School for Scandal" was rehearsed under the Viceregal eye. It was no doubt an invention of the enemy; but those who

were inclined to gird at the Viceroy for his love of gorgeousness, declared that he could never superintend a rehearsal until an especially resplendent sofa, all gilding and yellow satin, had been placed facing the stage, and His Excellency duly enthroned thereon.

A period of wars followed ; the news of the death of Cavagnari arrived at Simla during one of the A.D.C. performances ; and the fortunes of the Club ebbed, for nearly all the men who should have played or paid were away in Afghanistan. There came a dire day when the A.D.C. owed two years' rent of the theatre and had not the wherewithal to pay. Lord " Bill " Beresford came to the rescue. He was military secretary to the Viceroy, and was the guiding spirit of all race-meetings and *gymkhanas* in the summer capital, but he cheerfully took a new burden on his shoulders. He made an arrangement as to the rent ; the resources of Peterhof were brought to bear to aid the theatre ; the wars ceased, and the men swarmed back to Simla ; little suppers after the performances, to which each actor was entitled to ask a guest, became so popular, that the competition to be allowed to play, even as a super, was keen, and Hobday and his burlesques sprung into prominence. Major, then Captain, Hobday was one of Lord Roberts's aides-de-camp, and could not only write very witty doggerel, but was a clever burlesque actor and an excellent stage-manager. A burlesque, put upon the stage regardless of expense, became one of the events of the A.D.C. season ; the fairest of Capua's daughters sang in the chorus ; and the art of stage-dancing was much cultivated. Elaborate scenic effects were attempted, and one at least of the burlesques played almost as long on its *première* as a Drury Lane pantomime does.

To come to more modern times, of which I have per-





GROUP IN "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM," A.D.C., SIMLA.

From a photograph.

sonal knowledge. When, in 1890, I first set foot in Simla as an unpaid Attaché in the Intelligence Department, the Town Hall, a grey stone mediæval castle, with a red roof that leaked on to the floor of the ballroom, and the Gaiety Theatre tucked away in the basement, stood on the crest of the "nek" which joins Jakko to the long line of hill on which the rest of Simla stands, and the old *Nautch Gurh* had effaced itself by means of fire, a remnant of blackened walls "down the klud" being all that was left of it.

Some stone arches, slightly reminiscent of a cathedral cloister, shaded the stage-door and the entrance for the public. The stage-door led directly on to the stage, there being one or two steps to go down, which a newcomer, blinded by the sudden transition from blazing sunshine to gloom, generally fell down. The stage was small, being about the size of one of those of the smaller Strand theatres. The dressing-rooms, up aloft, were long, comfortless apartments, with white walls through which the damp sweated. A gallery crossed the stage at its far end, and a number of cupboards in this gallery held the "wardrobe" of the theatre—a very good one, from which any costume-piece could be handsomely clothed. On brackets projecting over the stage were rolled "back-cloths," and in the cellars below the stage were the "wings" and built-up scenes—an admirable assortment, for the A.D.C. was lucky enough to have in Mr. M'Cracken an amateur scene-painter who was, and is, a fine artist, and who, happily for the Club, liked the broad work of scene-painting. The row of arches which formed a balcony above the cloisters was enclosed with old scenery when there was a performance, and it was there that we supped. The lights on the stage and in the house were kerosene lamps. The *foyer*, into which the public entrance

led, the theatre shared with the Freemasons, whose lodge was reached through it. There was a frequent clashing of dates between lodge meetings and theatrical performances. *We* talked of the convenience of the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief being consulted; the Freemasons fell back upon Solomon and Hiram of Tyre. Stalls on a steep rake, and behind them a ring of boxes, the three boxes in the centre being those of the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Lieutenant-Governor; a dress circle, with boxes at either side, and a gallery stretching far back behind it—such was the Gaiety Theatre, Simla, when I first saw it. Lord Roberts, who is very fond of the theatre, was the President of our Club; the municipality were very lenient as our landlord; our funds were kept in a flourishing state by the letting of the boxes and stalls by Mrs. Corstorphan, a dear old lady, who kept a “repository” at the end of the big bazaar; and the affairs of the Club were managed by a committee of four, who met once a week, one of them, as honorary secretary, keeping the books. Members of this committee changed, and honorary secretaries came and went. Some of the names that recur to me as having been on the committee are those of “Joey” Deane, M’Cracken, Percy Holland, G. Williams, Yeatman Biggs (who died through overwork and dysentery during the Tirah campaign), and Gerald Morton.

During the summer the A.D.C. played on an average five important pieces, each running for three nights, and a dozen or so comediettas put on at matinées and supplemented by variety “turns.” Nothing came amiss to us, from Goldsmith, Pinero, and Haddon Chambers down to the lowest depths of three-act farce. India is a country in which piracy of plays is rampant, and as the A.D.C. went to the fountain-head and paid for the plays they

produced, managers and authors were kind to the Club. Mr. Pinero in particular always had a keen interest in the A.D.C., and sent out to them his plays in manuscript as soon as they were produced at home. The one play that he did not send out, for he considered it unsuited to amateurs, was "The Profligate." At a period later than that I am writing of the amateurs did play "The Profligate," and proved Pinero to be right, for Simla did not like it.

Strange to relate there were never, or hardly ever, any quarrels in the *corps dramatique*, the reason not being, I fancy, that we were made of different clay from other amateurs, but that the supply of actors and actresses was greater than the demand, and that a leading lady inclined to assert herself too much knew if she was asked to send back her part that there were two or three other ladies anxious and competent to take it. There is a tale still remembered of a bouquet presented to the wrong lady at the close of a performance of "Caste," and the trouble that came of it, but it would not be wise to re-tell it. The Deanes, Mrs. George Williams, Mrs. Little and her daughter (the latter now a charming actress on the London stage), Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Fortescue Porter, Mrs. Harry Stuart, Percy Holland, C. de C. Hamilton, Hunter Weston, Yeatman Biggs, were the stars of the dramatic side; while in musical pieces, the direction of which were in the safe hands of Major H. Clarke, Miss Ribenthrop, Miss Collen, and Miss Halliday made special successes.

It was not only in the Gaiety Theatre that the dramatic plant was reared, for both at Snowdon, the Commander-in-Chief's house, and at Barnes' Court, the Lieutenant-Governor's official residence, there were small stages, and both Lady Roberts and the Lieutenant-Governor generally

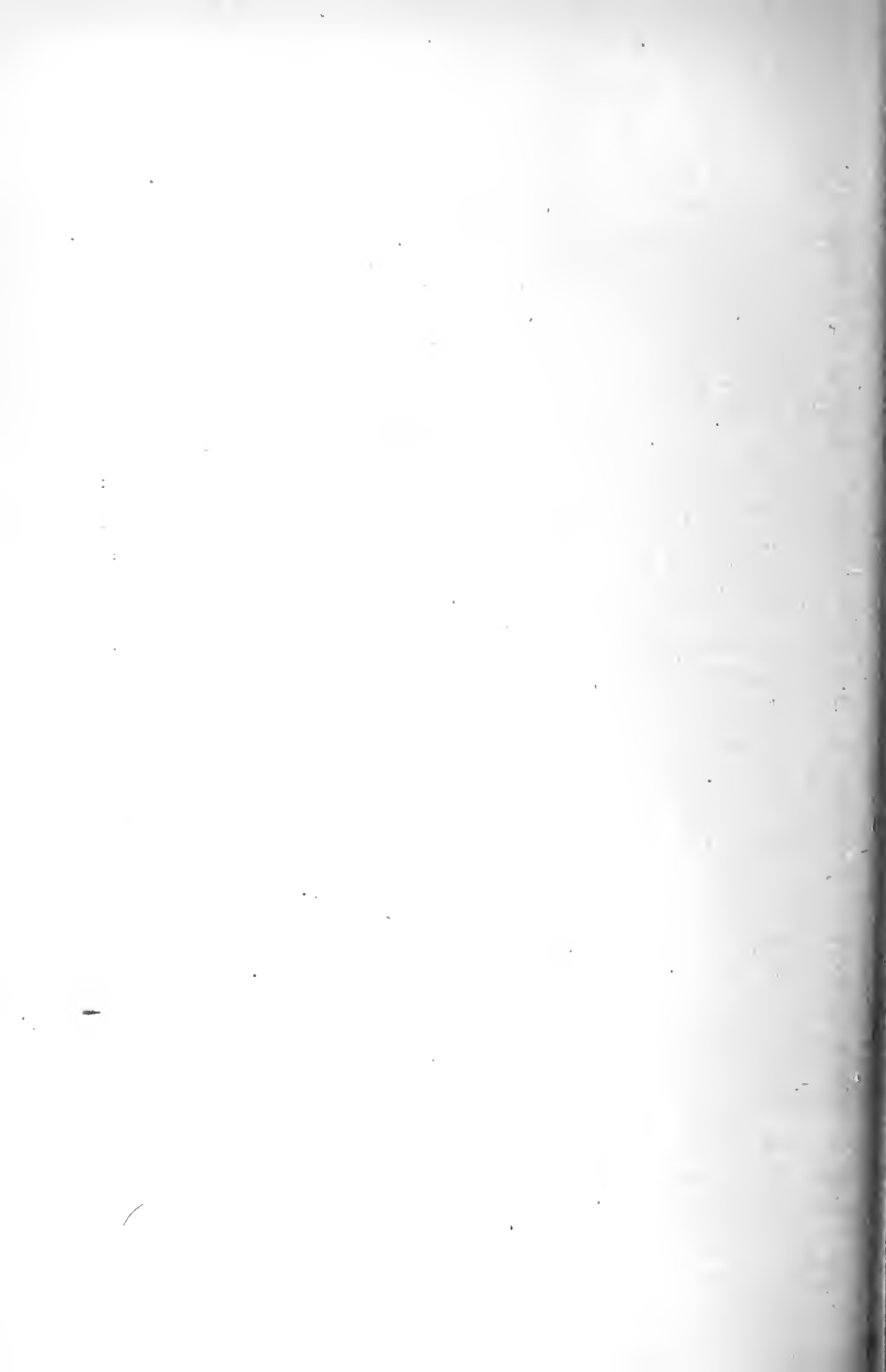
included theatricals amongst their yearly entertainments. At the Viceregal Lodge a stage was especially built, and scenery and a drop-scene painted, that theatricals might be one of the series of entertainments which Lord and Lady Lansdowne offered to Lord Harris, then Governor of Bombay, and Lady Harris when they visited them at Simla.

A record of Simla theatricals would be incomplete if I did not refer to some proposed pastoral performances which could not be held in the open air. The occasion was a series of representations of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," the profits of which were to go to Lady Roberts's pet charity, the "homes in the hills for nurses and hospitals for sick officers." The K.O.S.B.'s sent their string band to Simla to play Mendelssohn's music; all the stars of the A.D.C., musical and dramatic, were in the cast; and all the prettiest ladies in Simla worked hard at their dances and music as the Fairies. The dates for the performances had been fixed for the end of September and the beginning of October, when the rains should, by all rules, have ceased, and the lawn and grassy terraces of Peterhof, kindly lent by the Financial Secretary of the time, had been turned into a level, grassy stage, with altar and temple and seat of state, under a velarium, and arbours and thickets, faced by a semicircle of seats. In the responsible post of stage-manager I had drilled the chorus into exactitude in their dances, but not into silence, for nothing in the world could keep thirty-two Simla ladies silent for two hours. All that was wanted was the fine weather. Day after day those interested in the performances watched fresh banks of clouds sailing up from the plains, and at last in despair the open-air performances had to be abandoned, and "A Midsummer Night's



GROUP IN "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM," A.D.C., SIMLA.

From a photograph.



Dream" had to be played in the ballroom of the Town Hall, a hall the echo in which made hearing very difficult.

Of course any professionals travelling in India cast eyes upon the amateur dramatic paradise of Simla, and a clause in our lease obliged us to put the theatre at the disposal of other companies so long as this did not interfere with the A.D.C. performances. Small companies of professional players did occasionally come to Simla, were leased the theatre for a time, and were helped by the amateurs ; but Simla society did not take kindly to these invasions. The A.D.C. performances, good, bad, or indifferent, were recognised social functions, and were as much part of Simla life as the birthday ball or the races at Annandale. No professionals managed to make their performances a necessity of Simla life, and accordingly went down the hill, as a rule, saying unjustifiably hard things of the amateurs.

The A.D.C. still flourishes exceedingly ; the boxes are put up to auction now at the beginning of each season, and the income of the Club has increased. The theatre has been redecorated, and shines resplendent in salmon-pink, light green, and gold ; the positions of the boxes have been rearranged, electric light introduced into every part of the theatre, a green-room built, the dressing-rooms made habitable, a paid secretary secured, and a box office opened at the theatre. Fritz Ponsonby, Baden Powell, and Wilkinson have lately made successes on the side of the sterner 'sex, while Mrs. Wheeler has been adding to laurels already gained. "The Crusaders" and "The Geisha" mark the high-water mark of the comedy and musical performances of late years.

I have dwelt thus at length on the doings of the Simla A.D.C., because it is an example of the pitch of efficiency

to which an amateur organisation can be brought abroad ; but all over India, notably at Poonah, Mhow, Meerut, Calcutta, and Lucknow there are centres of attraction for amateurs. Calcutta shone at one time by the excellence of its amateur renderings of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, stage-managed generally by Mr. Nicol, a very clever amateur ; and I remember that at a dinner-party the hostess as a pleasant item of information told Mr. W. S. Gilbert, newly landed, that two of his pieces—both, needless to say, pirated—were being performed in the city of palaces. What Mr. Gilbert's answer was I did not catch. At the Saturday Night Club, a little "cock and hen" institution, there were constantly theatricals on a small scale.

There have always been in India certain amateurs who have established a club, and as often as not built a theatre, in whatever station they have been stationed in. Colonel and Mrs. Moore-Lane are perhaps the brightest examples of this, and Quetta, Poonah, where they joined forces with General and Mrs. Pottinger, Murree, Mhow, Bombay—all had to thank them for exceptionally good performances. Colonel Moore-Lane would, but for the illness of his wife, have carried out the biggest purely amateur tour ever attempted. The Bath School for officers' daughters was at that time a charity which attracted a great deal of attention in India, and Colonel Moore-Lane—who was then a captain—arranged to take the company of amateurs he had collected round him on tour through all the big cities of India, playing "My Milliner's Bill," "The Parvenu," and "Creatures of Impulse," the surplus over expenses—and the tour would have paid well—going to the Bath School. Unfortunately after the first performances at Poonah Mrs. Moore-Lane fell ill, and the tour had to be abandoned.

It was at Poonah, I believe, that Colonel Moore-Lane and his company had rather a trying experience. Some kind-hearted lady had suggested that the school children should be allowed to come to the dress rehearsal. Colonel Moore-Lane, being a kindly soul, and also knowing what a splendid audience school children make, consented willingly. He was surprised, however, to find, instead of the hundreds of smiling white faces he expected to see, row upon row of grave little copper-coloured visages, the little Indian children from the missionary schools. The harder he and his company worked to raise a laugh, the graver and graver this audience grew. They had been brought up to regard every *sahib* with the greatest respect, and the more ridiculous the *sahibs* on the stage made themselves, the more cause the little brown scholars found for not being drawn into anything so disrespectful as a laugh. It was at Poonah, too, though not at these particular performances, but at some given in a private house, that a good-natured soldier discovered that a prompter's life is not altogether a happy one. He had volunteered to prompt, just as he would have volunteered for any other dangerous duty, and though he knew nothing about the duties of a prompter, he set to work reading out the lines at the wings, and following the play as best he could. The leading comedian said horrible things to him under his breath, the heroine tried to kill him by a glance, the asides of the villain to him were worse than all the swear-words the authors had put into his part. The audience, who appreciated the situation, adjured him to speak up, and in kindly response he did read a bit louder. When the curtain dropped he was surprised to find that there was something more than a coldness shown towards him

by all the members of the company, and the hostess of the evening, who evidently thought that he had dined liberally before coming to the house, withered him by an inquiry as to whether he had had all that he wanted. The poor fellow mopped his brow. "Madam," he replied, with absolute truth, "all that I have had up to the present is unlimited abuse."

Major Hobday was another star of the dramatic firmament who lighted the sacred lamp of burlesque wherever he went. I have written of his advent in Simla, and at Poonah also he played with the greatest success. He there, as the Moore-Lanes before him, was assisted by General and Mrs. Pottinger and their daughters, and a happy marriage united two of the amateur dramatic dynasties of India.

General Yeatman Biggs did for Meerut what the Moore-Lanes did for Quetta, gave the station a theatre, complete with scenery and accessories, and started a club on a sound financial basis.

To turn to the Far East. Next to Simla, the best organised club that I have found in the uttermost parts of the earth was the Hong-kong Amateur Dramatic Club.

The early days of amateur theatricals in Hong-kong were scarcely palmy. The first "Victoria Theatre" was above a *go-down* in Wanchai, Queen's Road, East. The only way of getting into this theatre was by some very steep wooden stairs outside the building, and the whole place was odorous of what is known as "Singapore cargo"—damaged rice, fish maws, &c. The present Amateur Dramatic Club began life in 1860, when the first "Theatre Royal Mat-shed" was erected, where now stands the east wing of the City Hall. It was a perfect bijou inside, but a most ungainly-looking edifice outside. The

plans were drawn by the late Charles Murray, son of the well-known Edinburgh actor and manager. It was made entirely of bamboo mats and light planks, all lashed together with strips of rattan, not a nail being used. The corridors and passages were decorated with fire-buckets kept full of water and bill-hooks. The theatre was pulled down each year when the summer heats stopped the gaieties of the town, and rebuilt, generally on a new site, every winter. The last site of the mat-shed was where now stands the "married quarters" of the barracks.

The performances before the A.D.C., as at present constituted, opened in November 1860 belong to the heroic period lost in the mist of years. A Colonel who never spoilt a good story by a too scrupulous adherence to truth used to tell me various tales of the days when he was the manager of the theatre. His company rose to the height of grand opera, and his tenor was a gunner in the battery quartered in the town. The man was, unfortunately, addicted to drink, and the excitement of the coming performances generally drove him to stimulants. Therefore he, with his own consent, was always put as a prisoner in the guard-room for three days before a performance, marched under escort to rehearsal and to the performance, and only released, with *carte blanche* to take the best that the canteen could afford, after he had bowed to the audience at the fall of the curtain. There was another tale of a Chinese scene-painter who painted palm-trees all of the same thickness, all plumb upright, and each with the same number of leaves—but, as I have said, the Colonel's stories belonged more to the field of romance than of history.

The first performance of the Hong-kong Amateur Dramatic Club was of "Still Waters Run Deep," with

Attwell Coxon—whose name is writ large in the *libro d'oro* of Hong-kong theatricals—as Hawksley, and an exceptionally good Potter in Robert Watmore. The names of some of the men who did good amateur work in those days were: C. Murray; Arthur Twiss, R.A.; Pooley; E. H. Pollard; K. D. Tanner, 99th; Bisset Snell, 99th; Taylor, 5th Battalion Light Infantry; Alex. Roger; Wingfield; M'Leod; Henry Murray.

Two peculiarities the Hong-kong Amateur Dramatic Club had. One was that all the actors adopted *noms de théâtre*; for there was an idea, an unfounded one I believe, that the *typans*, the heads of the big *Hongs*, might object to seeing the names of the gentlemen in their houses in print on a theatrical programme. Therefore Coxon became Hockey on the bill of the play, and so on. The other peculiarity was that no ladies appeared on the Hong-kong stage until 1879, the women's parts being all played by men. The Esther Eccles of G. Caldwell was remembered and talked of in the days when I was quartered at Hong-kong as having been a very remarkable performance. Burlesque was the trump card of the Hong-kong Amateur Dramatic Club in the pre-ladies' days, and the "Field of the Cloth of Gold" was put upon the stage with a splendour that was never dreamed of at the Strand Theatre, a splendour that plunged the A.D.C. into debt for a considerable period. In E. Beart the A.D.C. had an exceptionally clever low comedian, so good indeed, that he would have taken a high position in any professional company in the days when burlesque was still played. His Widow Twankay in "Aladdin" was an exact reproduction of a *Sampan* woman; and in a performance given by the Choral Society, a friendly rival of the A.D.C., of "Pinafore," he convulsed the house with laughter by his make-

up and manner as Sir Joseph Porter, being an exact reproduction in every particular of the Governor, Pope Hennessy, who at that time was intensely unpopular. The Governor was not in the theatre, though he afterwards asked Beart to lunch at Government House, and laughed very heartily over the photographs of Sir Joseph Porter ; but the Lieutenant-Governor, General Donovan, was, and it was said that the finest performance ever seen in the Hong-kong theatre was the self-command he exhibited in not even smiling when everybody else in the house was roaring with laughter.

When, in 1882, I was quartered at Hong-kong, the matched days were long past, and the theatre occupied one wing of the Town Hall. It was a fine roomy building inside, with stalls, pit, and a broad dress circle. It was said to have owed its magnificence to the grand old days when Dent's and Jardine's, two of the great *Hongs*, competed as to which should be the most magnificent and munificent. In racing and in every other form of amusement the two houses were rivals. If one gave a fountain to the town, the other "went one better" by founding a city hall, and the competition on the turf culminated when one house bought a Derby winner to run on the race-course in the Happy Valley. Those magnificent days are gone. Jardine's is still a power in the land, but there was no Dent's when I was in Hong-kong.

In 1880 and 1881 the Hong-kong Amateur Dramatic Club had given two performances, which were as good as any amateur performances ever given. The plays were "New Men and Old Acres" and "The School for Scandal." Mrs. Philip Bernard, who subsequently came to London and played as a professional actress, acted the part of the heroine in each play delightfully, and had very strong support in Mrs. Hockey, Mrs. Chervau, and Mrs. Wood-

bine—to give them their *noms de théâtre*. Coxon, Beart, and Young were amongst the men who played with success.

During the time that I was in Hong-kong, "School" and "She Stoops to Conquer" were the successes of the A.D.C. seasons, and there was a performance of "The Wedding March," which was very extraordinary. "The Eccentricity" had been rehearsed with the greatest care, money had been lavished on the costumes and scenery; but the day before the performance H. Sommerset, the Adjutant of the Buffs, who was to have played Woodpecker, fell ill. A professional in a travelling troupe volunteered to take the part at twenty-four hours' notice, and at first was fairly firm in his words. The eccentricity towards the close of the piece was, however, not that contemplated by Mr. W. S. Gilbert. The play became a sort of "go-as-you-please" contest, and when the curtain came down the audience wondered what it had all been about.

In later years at Hong-kong comic opera has flourished exceedingly, for the secretary of the Hong-kong Club who succeeded E. Beart was, and is, a clever comedian, with a very good voice.

At Shanghai and some of the other treaty ports amateur actors flourished. I have no personal knowledge of their doings, but the papers used to be very complimentary to the Shanghai amateurs in their criticisms on the Robertson plays which were put on the stage.

In Japan, British amateur acting took a firm hold. There was in Yokohama a fine old actor, who had played with all the great men of the last generation both in America and England, and who had finally drifted into

a haven of rest, a little inn near the race-course. He was a tower of strength as a stage-manager, and a performance of "The School for Scandal" done under his management was surprisingly good. A performance of "The Mikado," of which three-quarters of the cast were amateurs, was probably the strangest perversion of that popular opera ever made. The occasion was the visit to Yokohama of the remnant of a travelling opera company. The amateurs rallied to the rescue, and "The Mikado" was rehearsed day and night by the *bénéficiaires* and their recruits. A scene with a profusion of real *wistaria* for wings and flies was improvised, and all Anglo-America in Yokohama had taken tickets, when the unforeseen occurred. The Mikado's government had a word to say as to an opera with such a title being performed in Japan, and the players—amateur and professional—were told that the opera could not be performed unless the title was changed and all reference to "The Honourable Gate" expunged. The company was equal to the occasion, and the opera of "Three Little Maids from School" was performed for the first and last time upon any stage.

In the Golden Khersonese, the dreamy land of the Straits Settlements, which dozes on the Equator, amateur theatricals did not flourish in the eighties, when I knew Penang and Malacca and Singapore well. At Penang the merchants and civil servants subscribed to build a stage in the new Town Hall. The stage was built, and, as I had once daubed paint on canvas under the instruction of Mr. Perkins, by universal consent I was designated as the man to paint a curtain. Whether I had forgotten the elements of "priming," or what went wrong, I do not know, but the view across the Penang Harbour, looking towards the Kedah Hills, which I put on canvas, was

plastered so thick with paint, that all the prospective amateur actors agreed that it would crack if it was pulled up. The situation was accepted, the curtain was left down, and there were no theatricals during the two years I was quartered at Penang.

Singapore now has, I believe, a fine theatre; but in the days of my subalternhood a long room under the Town Hall, with barred windows, the smell of a dungeon, and a rickety stage, was the theatre which travelling companies hired, and then called the amateurs to their assistance. The amateurs were lazy, and would always sooner pay to see somebody else act than act themselves—an unusual characteristic in amateurs. In earlier days, 1856-59, when the theatre was a long mat-shed at the foot of Fort Canning, which was then Government House, the amateurs were more energetic, and "Helping Hands," "The Prisoner of War," "The Critic," with E. J. Leveson, Barkley Read, Davidson, Mansfield Goss, W. Adamson, H. W. Wood, will still be in the memory of old Singaporeans.

At the Tanglin Club, a charming little building on the outskirts of Victoria, the town of Singapore, where every Saturday all the good fellows in the island used to gather together to play bowls, there was a little stage, and a comedietta preceding a dance was a very favourite entertainment for some kind hostess or host to give. "Joe" Miller was a low comedian of note, and on the walls of the club were photographs of Colonel and Mrs. Moore-Lane, the former in an impossible tall hat, as the hero and heroine of "Sweethearts," showing that those missionaries of the amateur drama had at one time or another set their seal upon the place. During the time that I was in Singapore we never aspired higher than "Cut Off with

a Shilling" and "Withered Leaves," which made an excuse for some very pleasant rehearsals, but did not deserve any comment as producing any exceptional talent.

South Africa has never, to my knowledge, supported any amateur dramatic club that could be compared to those of Simla or Hong-kong. Here and there some enthusiastic amateur has gathered a company together, which always disbanded itself with all speed on the departure of the bright particular star, and the professionals who occasionally raided the country from England, Australia, and America were often glad enough of amateur help. At the Cape, in the seventies, Sir Henry Cunningshame's smart young aide-de-camp, who has now blossomed into Sir Francis Grenfell, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., organised burlesques, and painted a very pretty drop-curtain, taking the *motif* from a willow-pattern plate. About the same time the 13th Light Infantry were doing some very good amateur work in Natal, and a performance of "Caste," in which Mrs. Kemmis, who has joined the professional ranks, and is well known on the London stage, played Esther, is still talked of in Pietermaritzburg as being the best amateur performance ever seen there. The critics in the local papers quite out-Heroded themselves on this occasion, and not content with dealing out double-barrelled adjectives all round, they hailed a clever young lady, who was making her first appearance on any stage in the character of Polly, as being "better than Mrs. Bancroft." The Theatre Royal, Pietermaritzburg, in which the amateurs played, was a large naked room, with a stage at one end ; but this was an improvement on the drill shed, which was what the colony was accustomed to in its earlier days. The men of the old 20th, a regiment which stayed so long in Natal that the War Office was

believed to have forgotten its existence, were the principal performers in the drill-shed days ; but every regiment that went to South Africa developed theatrical tendencies. Perhaps the quaintest regimental performance ever given in Africa was one organised by the Gordons at Newcastle, Natal, just after the Boer war. "Rob Roy" was the play, and the Gordons, as indeed most Highland regiments do, played a version of their own, learnt by word of mouth, scorning books as being misleading. A hut of straw and other light material had been run up to form a theatre, and when the hero thundered out "Ye have not yet subdued Rob Roy," the roof collapsed, the sides fell in, and Rob Roy was subdued, and the play ended at one and the same time.

Whether Oom Paul encourages amateur theatricals in Pretoria now I do not know ; but during the period that the Union Jack waved over Government House there one attempt at least was made to give a theatrical performance. Those of us who were the movers in the enterprise held a consultation, and after lifting our eyes as high as Robertson, we came at the end to a modest selection in "Ici on Parle Français." Even then our available ladies were too few to fill the parts, and a son of Colonel Weatherley, who met his death so bravely in the Zulu war, was put into petticoats. The performance never became an accomplished fact. Secocoeni in the northwest of the Transvaal, and Gassibone in the south-east, must have had a spite against amateur actors ; for on the day on which the dress rehearsal was to have taken place news came that these two chiefs were giving trouble, and it was "boot and saddle" for us, not sock and buskin.

Kimberley was the South African town in which amateur acting flourished the most, and the head of the

amateurs there was the late Mr. "Barney" Barnato. If instead of making him a millionaire fate had decreed that he should make a living by the stage, he would have drawn a big salary. His appearance at either of the theatres—for Kimberley boasted two zinc-roofed edifices called theatres—was a sure draw, and the professional companies, to whom Kimberley was in the seventies the El Dorado that Johannesburg has become in the nineties, used always to induce him if possible to play some character. "Barney" played Othello and Iago alternately with Fairclough, the American tragedian; but Mathias, in "The Bells," was his favourite part. He played it scores of times, and always filled the theatre. M'Closky, in the "Octoroon," was another of Mr. Barnato's favourite characters, and of one of his appearances in that character there is a story told.

There was a clever young lady amateur who frequently acted with "Barney." In this particular performance she was the Zoe to his M'Closky. One of the many admirers of the young lady's beauty and talent had secured a seat in the front row of stalls, and followed the closing scene of the third act with ever-increasing excitement. When the auctioneer, registering M'Closky's bid, came to his final sentence, "Is there any other bid? For the first time, twenty-five thousand—last time!" the enthusiast in the stalls leapt to his feet. "Twenty-seven thousand!" he shouted. "You may be a millionaire, but you don't buy that girl." It is sad to have to end the story by narrating that the father of the young lady waited for the enthusiast outside the theatre, and smote him violently for compromising his daughter in this manner.

There was a good deal of punching of heads incidental to amateur acting at Kimberley in those days. There was

a well-known dentist who sometimes trod the boards, and his enemy, probably a rival amateur, would sit in the front row of the stalls and laugh during all the pathetic scenes. At last the dentist could stand it no longer. He leapt over the heads of the orchestra, hit the laughter a violent blow, saying, "That will teach you to laugh in the wrong place," and then, much relieved, climbed back on to the stage and proceeded with his part.

"Barney" himself was quick enough to put up his hands. It so happened that a critic in one of the local papers said of his *Othello* that it was reminiscent of the Ethiopians on Margate Sands. The criticism was resented, and "Barney" struck the critic, as he thought, but picked out the wrong man. The real writer of the article, who was looking on, discovered himself. "You would never criticise me in such base terms," said "Barney." "Wouldn't I?" said the offender. "I only used those because I could think of none worse." There was no more bloodshed, however.

The same critic, who was a well-known mining man, and amused himself by writing as an amateur, once expressed himself in pungent terms as to the talent of a violinist who played a solo at one of the amateur performances. On the day on which the criticism appeared in print the critic's friends dropped in one by one to his office to tell him that the violinist was going to "go" for him, and had taken up a commanding position for that purpose. The critic, who was a small man, thought if he was to be "gone for" it had better occur before as small an audience as possible, and sallied forth at the hour when there were the fewest people about. The aggrieved violinist was ready for him, but the critic, to his surprise, found that when he fell he was on top. The police court

was the scene in which the second act was played, and the violinist complained to the magistrate that the critic had bitten his finger. The critic's defence was that he had a strong dislike to resin, and that if the violinist put a finger into his mouth his teeth would naturally close. A fine of £5 inflicted on the violinist closed this incident of amateur criticism.

The Kimberley amateurs took themselves very seriously in those days. There was much rivalry at one time between the two theatres, the Royal and the Lanyon, and Mr. Barnato and his following of amateurs were warm supporters of the Royal. Not only did he and other millionaires spend their nights in pasting throughout the town posters of the Royal over those of the Lanyon, but he subsidised a paper, *The Mining Gazette*, to fight the Royal's battles in print. A grand amalgamation, "Barney's" usual remedy, was the end of the dispute.

General Digby Willoughby was an amateur who, playing in Natal and Kimberley, was a star whose radiance only paled before "Barney's" tragic efforts. The General (who at that time was, I fancy, only a captain, not having as yet led the troops of Her Majesty of Madagascar to victory) had this advantage over the millionaire, that he could sing. But he did not always sing, for I can recall a performance of "Ben Bolt" in which, when the General came upon the stage as the hero, there was a Macready pause which lengthened into an undoubted "dry up." Then Ben Bolt strode down to the footlights. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I am very sorry, but I have forgotten every word."

Of the managers who utilised the services of the amateurs there was no one who knew the art of tickling their vanity as did Captain Disney Roebuck, who for a

time had a clear field of operation in the Cape and Natal. "Still Waters Run Deep," with himself as John Mildmay, was his *cheval de bataille* in all cases of need, and many were the amateur Hawksleys and Mrs. Sternholds whom he coached. He had a curious temper, and many stories were told of his autocratic methods. *De mortuis*, &c., but I may be permitted to tell the tale of Disney Roebuck and the French horn player. Various versions of the tale are told of other men ; but I hold that mine is the only legitimate and original version. One of Gilbert and Sullivan's pieces had been put into rehearsal—either at Cape Town or Kimberley—and Roebuck, superintending matters from the front, saw one of the French horn players sitting paring his nails. He was down on him at once, and asked him why he was not playing. The man explained that he had so many bars' rest. "You are discharged," said the Captain. "I pay men to come here and play, not to rest."

The best-paying amateur performance ever given in South Africa was one of "Trial by Jury" played by amateurs at Kimberley. The surplus proceeds were to be devoted to the needs of the wounded in the Russo-Turkish war. The expenses were heavy, but the sum of £400 net was handed over to the charity.

Before leaving the subject of Kimberley and its amateurs, I must tell the story of the Boer and the train, which, if it has nothing to do with amateur acting, has a great deal to do with amateur play-going. The railway in the days I am writing of had not progressed farther towards Kimberley than Wellington, and the Boers in the Free State and the Transvaal had never seen a steam-engine. A melodrama was being played at Kimberley, the sensation scene in which showed a train crossing the

stage. The fame of this reached as far as Bloemfontein, a two-day journey by ox-waggon from Kimberley, and an old Boer who wished to see the sight inspanned his oxen, and with his *wrow* started for Kimberley. He arrived on Saturday morning, the last day on which the play was to be performed, and going early to the theatre took stalls for himself and his wife. The rest of the day he spent going from store to store and bar to bar, telling everybody of the wonderful sight he was going to see in the evening. Amongst the people in whom he confided was the champion practical joker of the mining town, and the joker determined that the Boer should not see the wonderful steam-engine, so he too went to the box-office and took a seat immediately behind those secured by the Boer. He confided his coming joke to one or two of his friends in order that he might have an audience, and they went to the theatre to see what was going to happen. The Boer and his wife sat stolidly through the first scenes of the play. At last came the train scene with its tunnels at each wing. The unconscious hero or heroine was put upon the line, the lights changed from red to green, and the advancing "chug chug" of the engine grew and grew in intensity. Just as the steam gushing out before the engine came from the wings the Boer received a resounding bang on the head from behind, and he and his wife looking round, found the practical joker full of apologies for his clumsiness. They turned their heads again ; but, alas ! the train had passed and vanished, and it was a disappointed old Boer who inspanned and set out back on his forty-eight-hour journey to Bloemfontein, while the wicked joker rejoiced much over his successful wickedness.

To jump from Continent to Continent, from Africa to

America, I have to plead entire ignorance as to amateur actors and their doings in Canada—I have no personal experience, and so cannot write on the subject. The West Indies are a stronghold for amateurs, and the name of Colonel Kelly is still remembered there as a very successful organiser ; but here again I cannot speak from experience. The Barbadoes at one time had such a reputation for amateur acting that the performances at the theatre used to be advertised in New York to induce travelling millionaires from the States to make a stay in the islands of sunshine ; but here again I am at fault for want of personal experience ; and the same apology for ignorance must serve in the case of Australia and New Zealand.

In conclusion, may I thank the good fellows from two Continents who have come to my assistance and have jogged a defective memory ?

XI

THE WESTMINSTER PLAY¹

By M. L. GWYER

EVEN before the time of Queen Elizabeth, who is always recognised as the Royal Foundress of St. Peter's College, Westminster, a school existed near the Abbey, at which Latin plays both of Plautus and Terence were acted yearly, as indeed seems to have been the custom at most schools of the period, as well as at Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, where statutes are to be found enjoining the practice. Dr. Nowell, who was appointed Head Master in 1543, is mentioned as having introduced the reading of Terence to improve the Latin style of the day ; while the earliest English comedy extant, avowedly formed on the model of those of Plautus and Terence, was written about 1550 by Nicholas Udall, then an usher at Westminster. But Elizabeth, when she founded and endowed the school anew, ordained by statute that a play should be acted every year, as follows :—

De comædiis et ludis in Natali Domini exhibendis.

“ Quo iuventus maiori cum fructu tempus Natalis Christi terat et cum actioni tum pronuntiationi decenti melius se assuescat, statuimus ut singulis annis intra duodecim post festum Natalis Christi dies vel postea arbitrio Decani, Magister et Praeceptor simul latine unam, magister choristorum anglice alteram comœdiam aut tragediam . . . agendam curent,”

¹ I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to the editors of the *Lusus alteri Westmonasteriensis* and to Mr. Forshall's "Westminster School."

which being translated runs :

Concerning Comedies and Plays to be performed at Christmas.

"In order that the young may spend Christmas-time with greater profit and obtain a better familiarity with graceful gesture and pronunciation, we ordain that every year within twelve days after Christmas or afterwards at the discretion of the Dean, the Headmaster or Under-master shall jointly see that one play in Latin, and the Master of the choristers that a comedy or tragedy in English . . . be acted."

A fine of ten shillings was to be imposed on the party whose negligence was the cause of the omission. There also occurs in an old account of the charge of the revels in 1564: "For certeyne plays by the grammer skole of Westmynster and childerne of Powle's, wages and diet for officers, taylers, mercers; and other provisions viijl. vjs. viijd." No record remains of the plays of those days, the earliest prologue extant having the date of 1704. Terence is pre-eminently the favourite of the Westminster boards; up to 1860 Plautus had only appeared on six occasions. The "Ignoramus," a modern Latin play by Ruggles, of Clare Hall, and Congreve's "Morning Bride" have been acted five times and once respectively. There is at the present time a regular cycle of plays, acted in rotation year by year, consisting of the "Trinummus" of Plautus, and the "Andria," "Adelphi," and "Phormio" of Terence in the order named. The play is acted by the Queen's scholars on the last Thursday, Monday, and Wednesday of the Christmas or play term. It is preceded by a prologue spoken by the captain dressed in Court dress, and is followed by an epilogue. The prologue was originally merely an introduction to the play, containing references to the more important events of the past year. It is now conventionally restricted to subjects connected more nearly with the school alone, a restriction which in some ways is

not altogether for the good: for instance, the writer of the prologue is deprived of all opportunities such as that of which Dr. Liddell made such exquisite use in his threnody upon the Duke of Wellington, which formed the sole subject of his prologue. But it is to the epilogue that the audience give their whole and undivided attention. Originally a dialogue between two or more characters, it has now assumed the functions of a Latin *revue*, a skit on prevailing foibles and fashions, on politics, foreign or domestic, of the day; the whole cast take part, and with the same names and characteristics, are transferred bodily into nineteenth-century costumes and manners. Extracts from more modern prologues and epilogues shall be given lower down.

The whole is acted in the college dormitory, a long lofty room which runs the whole length of the building, and measures 160 feet from end to end. Here about five weeks from the end of term a work of destruction begins; cubicles are abolished *pro tem.*, and a stage is erected at one end fitted with scenery, with the two houses indispensable to Roman comedy on either side. The back scene is a beautiful painting of Athens, with the Acropolis in the centre, designed in 1857 by Professor Cockerell, R.A., himself an old Westminster. The pit is immediately in front of the stage, and behind a gallery is built right up to the ceiling. The whole theatre when full may hold from five to six hundred spectators, without counting old Westminsters, who come and stand in crowds in all the gangways and every available space. Visitors are now made as comfortable as circumstances permit; but it can have been no light thing to sit through a Westminster play in the early years of the century, when hard benches only were available, and light was supplied by flaring

tallow candles. This, however, the editors of the *Lusus alteri Westmonasteriensis* assure us was the case. Still more quaint must have been the appearance of the actors themselves, dressed in frockcoats of the latest fashion or (in the case of the minor characters) in the liveries of footmen and servants. It is fair to say that they did but follow the example of all London theatres of that period, and those who did not consider it absurd in the case of Garrick could scarcely be expected to be over-critical in the theatre at Westminster. 1839 saw a change, however, when Dr. Williamson, then Head Master, introduced Greek costumes very much as worn at the present day. There is a conventional dress according to the character. The old men wear long white tunics reaching to the ground, with palliums of different colours. The young men appear in short tunics (often, it is to be feared, mistaken by the ladies for petticoats, who regard the characters with increased interest as representatives of their own sex) with palliums of red or blue, the red being always assigned to the less effeminate of the two—an invidious but only possible method of discrimination between the usual Terentian pairs.

To recount all the honoured names which are to be found among the casts of the various plays it would be necessary to give a list of nearly all the famous Queen's scholars who have been at Westminster. A few perhaps will suffice. Naturally enough in some cases there is no actual proof that they acted, as regular lists of the casts are not extant much before 1750; but as most of the persons mentioned held high places in the school, it is practically certain that they did. Such are John Dryden the poet, Bishop Trelawney (one of the famous seven bishops), John Locke the philosopher, Nicholas Brady, the composer

of the metrical version of the Psalms, Zachary Pearce, Dean of Westminster and Bishop of Rochester ; the Earl of Mansfield, perhaps the most famous of English judges, spoke the prologue in 1722 ; while Elijah Impey and Warren Hastings entered College together in 1747. Then we find the names of Robert Lloyd, the poet, and George Colman the elder in the same cast. In 1725 Charles Wesley acted Davus in the "Andria," and Richard Robinson, afterwards Primate of Ireland, that of Chremes. In the present century the names are perhaps not quite so numerous, but we may notice those of Sir Robert Phillimore and of Sir Walter Phillimore, lately appointed one of the Judges of Queen's Bench.

Others there are who have gained distinction in other branches of life. E. C. Burton and W. G. Rich rowed in the last Westminster eight that beat Eton in 1845, and Rich stroked the Oxford eight against Cambridge for three years in succession, while W. G. Armitstead, who acted in 1848-51, was afterwards Captain of the Oxford Cricket Eleven, while others there are whose more recent exploits forbid their names being mentioned in a sketch which professes to treat of a past heroic age.

Notices of the acting are not very common, but there are a few exceptions, notably that of George Lewis, whose acting in the "Ignoramus" in 1730 was so much admired that he went by the name of Ignoramus Lewis for the rest of his life. We are also told that in 1764 Garrick was so pleased with the Davus of John Eckersall that he made him a present of the freedom of his house. In a letter of Atterbury, Dean of Christ Church, to Trelawney, Bishop of Winchester, dated February 24, 1611, occurs the following :—"I spent the evening in seeing 'Phormio' acted at the College Chambers, where, in good truth, my lord, Mr.

Trelawney (the bishop's son) played Antipho extremely well, and some parts he performed admirably. Your lordship may depend upon it that, in whatsoever place he stands, he shall go first of the election to Oxford." Trelawney was elected head, and must have considered the labour he devoted to his part as well expended.

No account of the play would be complete without a reference to the "Cap," a peculiarly Westminster institution. On the last two play nights, after "God save the Queen" had been played, the old Westminster who is in the chair calls for a cap, and college caps are passed round by the captain, into which are put contributions to defray the expenses of the play, which are often heavy. Many of those who are unable to be present themselves at play-time never fail to remember their own acting days, and their presents to the cap form a large proportion of the whole. It is on record that in 1834 King William the Fourth was present, and before leaving the theatre presented £100 to the cap.

We have said that there is a cap on the last two nights only. This is because the first night (the ladies' night) is usually considered, perhaps rather ungallantly, as more or less of a dress rehearsal. No prologue is spoken, nor was the epilogue produced till recent years, when the strain of sitting out the comedy itself, without anything in the way of an after-piece which all could understand and appreciate, was barely compensated in the eyes of the audience by the excellence of the acting, however good that might be. "Gentlemen of the Press," however, are still requested to defer the publication of both prologue and epilogue in their various journals till after the third night, and the conservative *Times* refuses to give even a critique till after the second performance. An anecdote in connection with

this custom may be of interest. Sir Edwin Arnold, representing the *Daily Telegraph*, was once present on the first night, and committed to memory the text of both the epilogue and prologue while they were delivered on the stage; then, while walking back to the office of the paper, he rendered them into English couplets, the Latin and English versions appearing the following day in the *Telegraph*—a truly remarkable feat, which we believe to be quite authentic.

A few words as to the choice and coaching of the cast may not be out of place. A few days before the mid-term holiday the setting-up takes place. There is a good deal of competition for the various parts, which are decided by the Head Master and the Master of Queen's scholars, the latter of whom also undertakes all the coaching. It was once the custom to depend largely on outside help to instruct the actors, but the plan had many disadvantages, and the teaching has been entirely domestic for many years. It is not too much to say that by far the greater part of the success obtained by plays for the last ten years has been due to the careful coaching and indefatigable energy of the present Master of Q.SS. In spite of the demands on his time, he invariably succeeds in producing a cast of a high and uniform level of excellence, and in worthily continuing the best traditions of Westminster acting. The epilogue is not learnt till within a day or two of the first play-night; but naturally its macaronic couplets are much more easily committed to memory than the Terentian *senarii*.

Let us attempt to describe a Westminster play-night. The whole of the inmates of the College are pressed into service, and perform various offices. Some stand at different barriers to take tickets, others dispense pro-

grammes, others conduct ladies to their seats, and have often to soothe the wrath of husbands and brothers, for the ladies sit by themselves in seats of honour, and the gentlemen take their place in pit or "gods," and not seldom resent the separation. One boy is deputed to supply Gentlemen of the Press with necessary refreshments—a responsible position this, for critics are but mortal, and Latin plays are often dry. Up among the "gods" sit two seniors, rod in hand, who lead the *claque*, and signify the points for applause by waving their canes. The clapping begins when the Head Master enters the dormitory to the strains of "See the Conquering Hero comes," and continues till he and his party are seated. The captain then comes forth from behind the curtain, makes his bow, and recites his prologue, dressed, as has been said above, in Court dress, with bands. After this the play itself, with all its traditional points heartily applauded, the *claque* being generally quite out of it. The waits between the acts we fear strangers find abnormally long, but there are few old Westminsters who would see them curtailed. It is a general meeting of old friends and acquaintances, for one is sure to meet most of one's school contemporaries on one of the three nights.

Then comes another break, and the curtain rises on the epilogue; while the audience settle themselves down to see all the jokes, and laugh accordingly.

It is very rare indeed for an epilogue to hang fire; the spectators want to be pleased, and do not fail to be so. Finally, when the last "Floreat" has been said, "God save the Queen" played, and the "cap" circulated round the theatre, there is a rush for the stage, handshakings and congratulations are exchanged, and mothers and relatives express their pride at having recognised their sons in their

strange dresses. It is all very enjoyable, to none more so than to the actors themselves; to those whose last play it is, a tinge of regret is added, while those who have another year look forward to another triumph. And thus the lights are lowered, and the play is over for another year.

Some few extracts from prologues and epilogues of more or less recent date may be of interest as showing the character of most of them. Of the prologues, two will suffice. The first, dated 1838, is on Her Majesty's recent coronation.

PROLOGUS IN PHORMIONEM.

HENRY R. FARRER, *Captain*.

Quem nos praeterito ludum intermisimus anno
 Communis vetuit dum leviora dolor,
 Hunc iterum tractare iuvat, nobisque theatri
 Annua consueto tempore cura redit.
 Interea summas sensit res Anglia verti,
 Virgineamque iterum sceptrā tenere manum.
 Id quibus auspiciis, quoque accidit omine, dicat
 Vox populi unanimem testificata fidem;
 Dicat et ille dies quo nuper in aede sacrata
 Regia gemmatum frons diadema tulit.
 Vidimus huc alacri studio concurrere mundi
 Quot gremio heroas maximus orbis alit.
 Quin etiam audiimus strepitus populique faventes,
 Clamorem insolitis surgere ad astra modis.
 Hinc dum, fortunae felicia dona fatentes,
 Fudimus ingenua simplicitate preces,
 Ut pietas et casta fides, utque optima regnet
 Iustitia et toto quidquid in orbe boni est:
 Fas etiam solitum nobis sperare favorem
 Quaeque hanc fovit adhuc Regia cura, domum.
 Dumque piis manes animis veneramur Elizae,
 Quaeque dedit nobis haec loco cava, manum,
 Usque suis itidem Victoria praesit aluminis,
 Protegat et veteres, altera Eliza, lares.

A year ago you marked our absent Play ;
 Our common griefs had chased our joys away,
 Here we again present it : here we prove
 Our annual custom and our annual love.
 Meantime a change of monarchs holds the land ;
 Once more the Sceptre decks a maiden's hand.
 With what good omen this event befell,
 The common voice of loyalty may tell.
 So shall the day when in our hallowed shrine
 Her brow received the diadem of her line.
 'Twas at this spot, hasting with eager feet,
 Ourselves we saw earth's greatest heroes meet.
 Hence then, confessing fortune's gift so fair,
 We pour in simple confidence our prayer ;
 That piety and faith without a stain,
 Justice and all that's good begin their reign ;
 That we again may hope that grace to share
 Which aye has nursed us with its fostering care.
 And while we reverence still our good Queen Bess,
 Who founded this our home of happiness,
 May our new Queen our patroness become,
 And guard, Elissa's equal, this our home !

The next is part of that of 1898, and celebrates Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee. Curiously enough, the play is again the "Phormio."

PROLOGUS IN PHORMIONEM.

Vobis quod dicam prae pietate, prae fide,
 Huc Regium congressis in collegium,
 Scholaris ipse Regius, qua vos ego
 Laetari, si quem et alium, praecipue scio,
 Haec anni praebet optimi felicitas.
 Vivat Regina ! nostras ea regno recens
 Avito in templo, sella in regali sedens,
 Audivit ipsa voces : certe exaudiet
 Eadem nunc eadem resonantes fide.
 "Vivat Regina" quotiens hic clamantibus
 Acclamavere parietes nostrae domus !
 Qui clamavere, tanto annorum ex ordine,
 Quot cari ex illis conticuerunt ! quot sui
 Luxere ademptos iuvenes, seniores, senes !

Sed universi populi pollentes preces
 Hoc evicere nobis, ut sexagiens
 Liceat Reginam, feriis sollemnibus,
 Pietate iusta, amore vero prosequi.

Gathered within our Royal school you prove
 Once more your piety and loyal love.
 Surely Queen's scholars lack not words to-day !
 The year itself dictates—and we but say.
 The year's felicity a theme can give
 Of joy wherein we claim prerogative.
 Long live the Queen ! we cried, and still we cry ;
 We hail'd her earliest hour of majesty,
 When she besought the benison divine,
 Throned in the Abbey of her ancient line.
 Ah ! could these walls but speak, they would proclaim
 How oft that cry has echoed still the same.
 Could they not tell of many, young and old,
 (Dear hearts to us) whom death and silence hold,
 Whose cry was heard ? Omnipotence hath will'd
 Theirs and a nation's prayer alike fulfilled.
 Hence as the year once more brings round the Play,
 Duty commands—and does not love obey ?

And now for a few epilogue extracts, which shall all
 be of recent date save one, which, bearing as it does the
 date 1805, the Navy League at least will surely have
 made familiar :

Fungi

Anglia confidet munere quenque suo !

Here we have Battersea Park :

An matutinus vicos Batterque marina
 Aequora pneumaticis dum vorat ille rotis
 Cyclopedem sequitur Cylopes comitata virago
 Captivumque tenet nympa bifurca virum.

Does he spend all his mornings *à la mode*
 Riding a bicycle down Albert Road ?
 Or else inside the Park at Battersea,
 Where lady cyclists flock and take their tea,
 Where many a man, if there be truth in rumours,
 Has fallen a victim to a girl in bloomers ?

R

A certain Eastern potentate may still be remembered :

I nunc ! quid cessas ? non es Shahzada !

Hence ! away !

You've no Sh-hz-d- to prolong your stay.

To a person who has just been birched the following remark is made :

Reprime te tangatque locos Homocea dolentes !

The popular conception of the motor car :—

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens : *non* fumus ademptus ;
Motor currus hic est.

Demipho (*an Afrikander*) here appears on the stage and announces he is come to obtain damages. He is asked :

Davus. Quantum ergo petitis ?

Dem.

Modo milia mille librarum.

Davus (aside). Paulo ut reddatur vult spoliare Petrum !

Chremes (*a ruined farmer—now a politician*) takes occasion soon after to remark :

Sum Moderatus homo, non Progressivus, et ipse
Curabo ut nequeas bis dare verba "Globo" !

A certain pink journal was much flattered by the above couplet.

We refrain from comment on the pun a Röntgen rays photograph calls forth :

Infortunati nimium sua si bona norint !

The epilogue of 1897 was full of good things, and deserves to be quoted in full. As space forbids we append a few of the best points.

Lesbonicus (*a spendthrift*) is asked how he will make a living. He replies, "by writing a Royal Ode," which calls forth the quotation (*sic*) :

Nescio quid majus nascitur Austinide.

To which he rejoins :

Ranjitsinhji librum scripsit ; cur non ego carmen ?

The following will perhaps be recognised :

Laudabunt alii clarum Rhodon et Matabeles

Ferratasque tuas, o Buluvaio, vias ;

Occupet Hessiculum scabies ! Criticus mihi nil est Africus.

Lesbonicus proceeds to play cricket and makes a big hit, on which it is prophesied that :

Jessopus alter eris.

The next remark of his uncle was, we fear, made before the close of the last test matches in Australia :

Non defensoribus istis

Anglia eget : plorant jam domiti Antipodes.

The "mailed fist" thus appears :

"Care Henrice, manu armata, si forte necesse est

Fac ferias pro me, pro patriaque. Deus

Si volt, sic poteris circum tua tempora laurus

Texere. Tum frater, "Rex Domine omnipotens,

Majestate tua sacrosanctissime semper

Hoc evangelium discet ab ore meo

Qui volt, qui non volt. Saeclorum in saecula serene,

Maxime Rex ! Hoc, Hoc, Hoc, resonate !"

A reference to Klondyke brings forth the aphorism :

Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,

Auri sacra fames !

The reply is apt :

Est ibi dira fames—

Sed non solum auri !

There's thirst and hunger—of another kind !

Piper Findlater—or Milne—shall be the last :

Gordona Montanum nunc aequiperabimus illum

Qui modo Dargai saucius insonuit.

The Gordon Highlander I'll equal quite,

Who played when wounded on Dargai's height.

These quotations are sufficient to show the general scope and characteristics of Westminster epilogues. It goes without saying that they are the most popular part of the programme. Yet it is not the epilogue alone or the drama itself alone that is the great attraction of the play, nor even the acting, which is not always of the highest class ; for it is clearness of enunciation rather than gesture that is cultivated, as indeed befits a classical performance. Rather is it an indescribable charm, the outcome of the tradition of centuries, which appeals of course to Westminsters first, but also to all in a measure who have had the privilege of witnessing the performance ; a charm that causes year after year a large and distinguished audience to listen with attention and applaud generously from the first lines of the captain's prologue to the last " Floreat " of the ever popular epilogue.

FLOREAT.

XII

THE GREEK PLAYS AT BRADFIELD COLLEGE

By "SENTINEL"

BRADFIELD College, Berks, was the first of the Public Schools, as it has been one of the most successful and original, in reviving interest in the Greek drama among English literati.

In 1882 the "Alcestis" of Euripides was attempted at Bradfield on a comparatively humble scale, the scene of the representation being the College dining-hall. The Warden,¹ who had just assumed the reins of office at the College, was the leading spirit of the reproduction. Struck with the effect produced on scholarship by the visual presentment of the Greek drama, he determined to follow the example of Oxford University, where the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus had been recently performed, and the co-operation of Mr. F. R. Benson (now the well-known actor), Mr. W. L. Courtney (now editor of the *Fortnightly Review*), and others who had taken part in that representation, was invited towards putting on the stage the beautiful story of "Alcestis"—a story more suited to the taste of a modern audience than the more ambitious tragedy of the older poet, and immortalised by the genius of Browning in "Balaustion's Adventure."

¹ i.e. The Rev. H. B. Gray.—ED.

The Warden himself undertook the thankless rôle of Admetus, while Mr. Benson acted Apollo, and Mr. Courtney portrayed Hercules. The rest of the cast was composed of Bradfield masters and boys. The result was a triumphant success, and proved that without infringing on ordinary work a Greek play could be produced in a Public School, under the control of one dominating influence, far more easily than in the less restrained atmosphere of a university.

Those who were privileged to witness the performance realised that the Bradfield boys were "one play to the good" (to quote the language of a Greek Professor), and that the dead language had at length spoken with a living voice to the world of scholars.

The example of Bradfield was followed by other Public Schools—Cheltenham, Uppingham, Leamington, and Edinburgh Academy—though spasmodically, and without any particular order of procedure. But it was reserved for Bradfield once more to break out into original methods.

In 1888 an old and disused chalk-pit just outside the College grounds came into the Warden's hands. He immediately conceived the idea of converting it into a Greek theatre, on the model of those existing in the best times of the Attic drama.

With the aid of his boys, and afterwards with the help of more skilful workmen, he cut into the solid chalk ten tiers of seats, while he shaped the orchestra on the model of that at Epidaurus, in the Peloponnese—*i.e.* a complete circle or proper dancing place, such as existed when the Attic drama was little more than a series of Hymns to Dionysus, interspersed with a monologue or dialogue between actors (from a temporary platform), introduced to give breathing time to the chorus.

The type of the theatre at Epidaurus was chosen, because it was the only one on the mainland of Greece which had escaped the alterations introduced by the Romans; for that people, after conquering Achaia, having no chorus in its own drama, found the complete circle unnecessary, and little by little invaded and cut off the dimensions of the original orchestra by pushing forward their stage.

The stage buildings at Bradfield had to be left more entirely to the imagination and discretion of the revivalist, since the remains of the ancient Greek structures are of an extremely scanty description. The form decided on at Bradfield was that of a Greek temple, to which indeed the original ancient buildings must have been very similar. The material was of wood, as was no doubt that of the earliest structures, the result being excellent for acoustic purposes.

In June 1890 Bradfield College, thus furnished, produced under unique conditions its first open-air Greek play, the "Antigone" of Sophocles. "For the first time," said the journals of that date, "since the downfall of the Greek stage a Greek drama has been produced under conditions exactly identical with those of ancient times." All the players and all the chorus were either Bradfield masters or boys.

The Warden himself took the part of Coryphæus; the heroine Antigone and the tyrant Creon were Sixth Form boys, the former being now the Tutor of an Oxford College.

No outside help was asked for, and none was needed. Even the music, in the severe Dorian Modes, was composed by the Precentor of the College. A single instrument was used to accompany the choric songs, the musician (Rev. L. de Brisay) performing on the clarinet

—the instrument most nearly approaching the flute of the ancient Greeks.

There were many reasons for choosing the "Antigone." It is perhaps the most perfectly constructed of all the Greek tragedies extant. The principal character is conceived in a spirit of such sublimity, refinement, and self-sacrifice, that it has become the ideal female type in fiction for all time. And at Bradfield, for the first time since Athenians flocked to the theatre of Dionysus to hear with a sort of religious awe the contests of their great tragedians, there was heard by hundreds of modern spectators this greatest and most pathetic of all tragedies in an open-air theatre, the proportions and acoustic properties of which Pericles might have envied.

The enthusiastic reception which was accorded to the "Antigone" impelled Bradfield to attempt a more ambitious effort in 1892. In the June of that year the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus was played, and again the cast was composed exclusively of Bradfield masters and boys.

The musical part of the performance was strengthened by the introduction of the harp, which, in the skilled hands of the Welsh harpist Aptommas, gave colour and emphasis to the thinner tones of Mr. de Brisay's clarinet. This time the production was helped by the experienced eye and hand of Mr. George Hawtrej, who devoted much time and thought to the stage accessories. His influence introduced perhaps too modern a touch at times, though it doubtless helped the dramatic action, which requires in this most tragic of all the dramas to be gradually worked up to its climax. As a pageant the "Agamemnon" is by far the most impressive of all the productions of Æschylus, though it lacks the sublimity of Sophocles's "Antigone," and the tender pathos of Euripides's "Alcestis."

Clytemnestra, in the person of Mr. C. M. Blagden, the same Sixth Form boy who acted as Antigone two years before, and Cassandra, a part which was interpreted by Mr. E. d'A. Willis, were the leading characters in the play, and were acted in a way which was quite marvellous in schoolboys.

Three years elapsed before the next performance, which was the "Alcestis" of Euripides, and June 1895 witnessed the repetition of the play which had been so humbly put on the Bradfield stage thirteen years before.

The development in 1895 was a great one.

Mr. C. F. Abdy Williams, whose knowledge of the principles of ancient Greek music is probably not surpassed by many, if any, musicians in England, had come to Bradfield as Director of the Music of the College, attracted partly by the fame of its Greek plays.

The Warden and Mr. Williams determined on no less bold a move than the reproduction of the ancient flutes found at Pompeii, and now in the Museum at Naples, and the manufacture of the ancient *citharæ*, and the stringing of them on the ancient Greek principles.

It was, however, one thing to reproduce the instruments, quite another to teach boys to play them with effect. The Warden's efforts in this direction also, however, were crowned with success. Nine instrumentalists (the number of the Muses) were ready in the middle of June to accompany the choric songs.

The music was written by Mr. Williams. Dr. Gray again took his former part of Admetus, and two Sixth Form boys, now at Oxford, acquitted themselves more than creditably in the difficult parts of Alcestis and Hercules. Five thousand spectators on four days wit-

nessed this remarkable production, which for magnificence of weather, as well as for the excellence of the acting, carried away the palm even from its two predecessors.

The success of the three above-mentioned performances established the reputation of Bradfield in this combined domain of scholarship and dramatic representation.

The question came before the authorities whether the three years' cycle should be henceforth adopted. This was decided in the affirmative, and the next date was fixed for June 1898.

Another question also arose. Should the representations be confined to the three plays already acted, one from each of the three tragedians, or should they go further afield and attempt to break fresh ground? After much consideration it was definitely decided to take the former course. First, on account of the necessity of a *male* chorus, while many of the other possible plays involved *female* choruses. The "Electra" of Sophocles was rejected for this reason. Secondly, on account of the paucity of plays, of which the plots were suitable for modern audiences. The "Œdipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles was abandoned on this ground. Thirdly, on account of the fact that some plays, which satisfied the two above-named conditions, were impracticable, because the dramatic action ceased half way through. The "Ajax" of Sophocles was a case in point. Henceforth, therefore, Bradfield was to be known for its cycle of three plays, played triennially in the following order:—

The "Antigone" of Sophocles.
The "Agamemnon" of Æschylus
The "Alcestis" of Euripides.

The play of June 1898—the “Antigone” of Sophocles—will be so fresh in the minds of our readers, that little need be said about it here. The Warden had, in the previous winter and spring, however, executed a great, almost a herculean task, which deserves mention. He doubled the size of his auditorium by cutting out several thousand tons of chalk, and making thereon eight more tiers of gradually increasing circles, so that the whole was capable of seating more than two thousand spectators. The *citharæ* had also undergone a change, by the fact that the neck of the instruments were removed, thus bringing them exactly to the archaic form. The chorus and actors were again all Bradfield masters and boys, with the exception that Antigone and Ismene were played by ladies “connected with the College,” whose Greek scholarship was as undeniable as was the purity of their accent and their dramatic powers. In adopting this course the authorities followed the precedent of both Universities; and whatever criticism may be brought to bear on the innovation, may with equal force be maintained against the acting of Shakespeare’s heroines by women on the modern stage. If it be true that women never acted in the dramas of Sophocles, it is equally true that the female parts in Shakespeare’s times and plays were undertaken not by ladies, but by boys from the choirs of St. Paul’s Cathedral and other “singing places.” If it be unclassical for a lady to play Antigone, it is equally heterodox for Miss Ellen Terry or Mrs. Beerbohm Tree to represent Ophelia. But the fact is, that though a Public School boy of ability could act, and act well, the parts of Clytemnestra and of Alcestis, it is well nigh an impossibility for him to enter into the complex feelings and position of

an Antigone, if it be true, as we believe, that "the struggle of conflicting duties in the single personality of Antigone is the chief motive of the play." How the lady who acted the part conceived it, most of our readers may have had an opportunity of realising in June last.

In summing up this brief review of the Bradfield plays, it may be interesting to note how much more statuesque and simple the acting of the ancient Greek drama must have been than modern scenic representation.

First, all that we call "tragic" was done behind the scenes. Messengers simply came forward to recite the tragedies which had taken place within.

Secondly, there was no "perspective" in ancient tragedies when acted. They may be contrasted with modern plays, as statuary may be compared with painting. *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides* carved for representation, as it were, single figures standing "nakedly" against the background, with no subsidiary groups around them. In modern plays, on the other hand, the principal characters form merely the foreground; the background is shaded off into "attendants, soldiers, and crowds." There is perspective everywhere.

This is perhaps what strikes the spectator, or rather the auditor (for we go to "hear" a Greek drama, not to "see" it), more than anything else when he goes into the Bradfield Theatre, and sits in the open air, rejoicing in the clear sky, and sheltered from the wind by the trees which fringe with green the white soil above the topmost seats, while the birds in the branches from time to time join in the chorus, and the "unrehearsed swoop of the swallow" almost fails to make us remember that we are not in the home of *Sophocles*, "the fairest home in the

land of goodly steeds, the white Colonus, where the clear-voiced nightingale most loves to sing, amid towers that know no heat of sun, no blast of storm."

It does good to any man to go and listen to a Greek play at Bradfield.

[Since this chapter was written the "Antigone" of Sophocles has been acted at Bradfield, and owing to the great success thereof, five representations were given. At the kind invitation of the Warden I was present at the last of these—my first experience of a Greek play—and it will long remain in my memory. From the moment the closed doors of the Temple opened, at the sound of the trumpet, and the Herald descended the steps bidding us welcome, until the last of the Chorus disappeared up the wooded lanes flanking the side of the theatre, the illusion was maintained. The acting struck me as very intelligent and earnest, and in one or two cases specially good. The style adopted by the different actors was that of dramatic declamation. The only two who departed from this method were the Messengers, who spoke their Greek in a more modern tone. This produced an excellent effect, and made a good contrast. Directly these announcers of news appeared, it seemed quite natural that they should speak in a different manner to the other characters, serving thus to grip the audience and produce the necessary dramatic effect. To single out any particular impersonations from a general all-round excellence, I should mention the Antigone of Mrs. Gray and the Creon of Mr. J. H. Vince. These two practically bore the weight of the tragedy on their shoulders, and were quite admirable. I was much struck, too, with the stage-management of Mr. C. de M. la Trobe. The characters moved easily and at the right time, and the chorus groupings and changes were all picturesque and well thought out.

But what was most noticeable throughout the performance was the guiding hand of the Warden, who has superintended every production at Bradfield, and to whom belongs the honour that these Greek plays now evoke such general interest. Mr. Abdy Williams's chorus music, too, written in the Greek mode, was very musicianly and interesting.

Altogether a delightful day.—ED.].

THE "ANTIGONE" OF SOPHOCLES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Creon | . . . | (<i>King of Thebes</i>) | . . . | J. H. VINCE. |
| Haemon | . . . | (<i>Son of Creon</i>) | . . . | C. G. LING. |
| Tiresias | . . . | (<i>A Seer</i>) | . . . | S. T. SHEPPARD. |
| Sentinel | . . . | | | A. M. C. NICHOLL. |
| First Messenger | . . . | | | L. STAREY. |
| Second Messenger | . . . | | | T. B. LAYTON. |
| Antigone | . . . | (<i>Daughter of Œdipus</i>) | | Mrs. H. B. GRAY. |
| Ismene | } | { (<i>Sister of Antigone</i>) } | | |
| Eurydice | } | { (<i>Wife of Creon</i>) } | | Mrs. A. BELLIN. |

CHORUS OF THEBAN SENATORS.

Coryphæus H. H. PIGGOTT.

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| G. R. BARKER. | J. T. HAYTON. |
| G. A. W. BOOTH. | T. H. F. JOHNSON. |
| F. J. BROWELL. | A. B. D. LANG. |
| U. CAWLEY. | H. R. LATHAM. |
| A. F. GARDINER. | J. L. MARTIN. |
| L. F. GOLDSMID. | R. MASTER. |
| G. M. HAMILTON. | G. A. SIMMONS. |

MUTÆ PERSONÆ.

C. G. LING and E. L. WARMAN, *Heralds*.

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| J. S. ARMSTRONG | } <i>Soldiers.</i> | R. B. HERBERT | } <i>Attendants</i> |
| G. M. CLARK | | G. K. LEACH | |
| G. S. FREEMAN | | J. C. HIGGINS | } <i>Attendants</i> |
| H. F. HODGES | | A. A. L. PARSONS | |
| A. G. P. RIGBY | | | } <i>on Queen.</i> |
| B. T. HEATHCOTE | } <i>Watch-</i> | Z. N. BROOKE | } <i>Tiresias's</i> |
| T. H. M. PHILLIPS- | | | |
| CONN | | | } <i>Boy.</i> |

Flutes: J. R. FOX, J. E. GARDINER, A. S. HOARE, A. J. F. HOOD.*Lyres*: C. F. ABDY WILLIAMS, H. C. BURNETT, A. C. COOPER,

A. H. LOUGHBOROUGH, A. C. MOURILYAN.

Stage-manager: C. DE M. LA TROBE.

XIII

COUNTRY HOUSE ACTING

By LEO TREVOR

UNDER this heading my friend the editor has asked me to write a short chapter on my recollections and experiences as an amateur actor. He also requested me to be "chatty¹ and anecdotal," and I breezily consented. But it is one thing to be chatty and anecdotal in a comfortable smoking-room about 11.30 P.M., and another to sit in front of a sheet of fair white foolscap at 11.30 A.M. cudgelling your brains for reminiscences, and totally—I might almost say "anecdotally"—at a loss for a single one. To add to my difficulties I have never kept programmes or newspaper cuttings, partly I fear from chronic and constitutional sloth, and partly because I am unable to take an active interest in the mildly tolerant criticisms of the local press. They are so unsatisfying and disappointing; and yet there was a time—ten years ago—when the arrival of a country newspaper containing an account of some recent performance in which I had taken part made my heart beat quickly.

But custom soon staled their invariable monotony. There was so little said about the artists, and such a generous space allotted to an inventory of the provincial magnates in the front of the house, a few lines to ex-

¹ I feel sure the word used was "conversational."—ED.

plain the plot of the piece represented, and three-quarters of a column devoted to a description of the furniture ("kindly lent by our esteemed fellow-townsmen Councillor Wardroper of High Street"), and a long panegyric on the "floral decorations, which were in the competent hands of Alderman Gardener, J.P., of the Nurseries, Towns End." After stating that "Lady Anastasia Smith did all that was possible with the part of Esther, and that Mr. Leo Trevor played the drunkard Eccles as though to the manner born," the article would conclude with the vaguely comprehensive statement that "the other ladies and gentlemen of the caste" (caste with an "e" invariably) "gave equal satisfaction in their respective rôles," and a perfect avalanche of thanks to Lieutenant-Colonel Burnisher, 25th (Volunteer) Battalion of the Royal Muffineers, for so kindly permitting the magnificent band of the regiment to discourse sweet music from the orchestra during the somewhat lengthy waits between the acts.

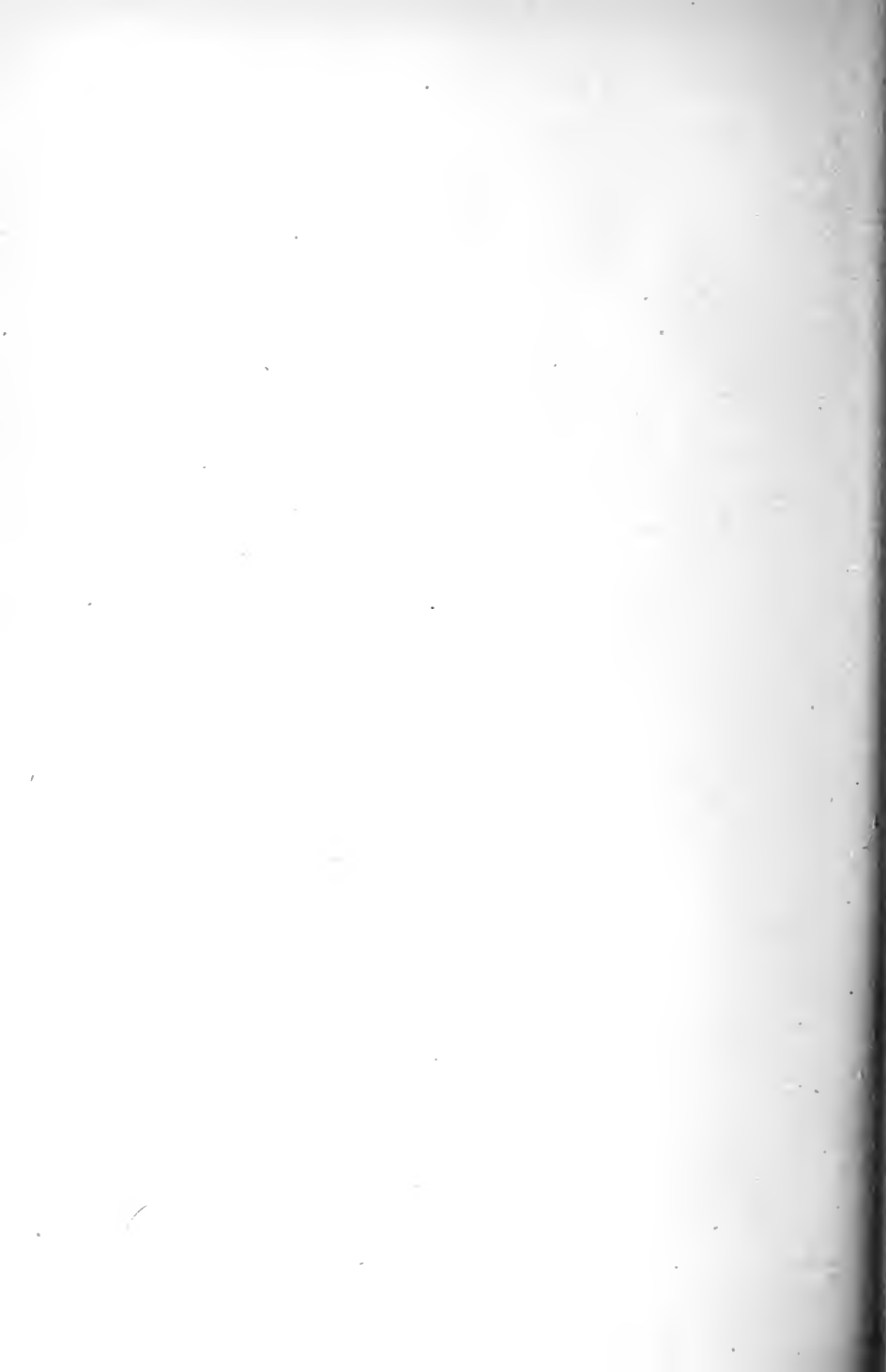
This may be good, sound journalism from a commercial point of view, but I feel sure that Mr. William Archer will agree with me when I say that it is not dramatic criticism in its highest sense.

When I said I never kept programmes, I ought to have made a reservation. I have a programme before me as I write, which is one of my most treasured possessions. It was printed two years ago at Biarritz by a French firm, on the occasion of a performance of "Sweethearts" that Mrs. Willie James and I gave at the Casino in aid of "Les Petites Sœurs de Charité." It is libellously reported among my friends that my handwriting is not so distinct as might be wished, and a kind lady, Miss Blanche Forbes, to whom I showed the draft of this programme, generously offered to copy it out in



MRS. W. JAMES.

From a photograph.



her own fair, lucid hand, "in order that the foreigners should have no possible excuse for errors and misprints." I accepted gratefully, and it was with a feeling of perfect confidence that I applied myself to the perusal of the proof a few hours afterwards.

I reproduce the document below as an example of the marvellous faculty possessed by continental peoples for mastering the intricacies of foreign tongues.

CASINO, BIARRITZ,

APRIL 3ND AT 8 CLOCK.

"SWEETEARTS,"

BY W. S. GILBERT.

IN 2 ACTS

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Mr. Henry Spreadbrow | . | . | . | . | Dr. LEO TREVOR. |
| Wilcow (a gardenera) | . | . | . | . | Mr. MAMWARING. |
| Jenny Morticolti | . | . | . | . | Mrs. WILLIAM JAM. |

The cast of the second act was fairly correct, but concluded with this astounding and dismally prophetic announcement: "An interval of thirty jeers is supposed to elapse between Acts I. and II."

Why the degree of "Doctor" was bestowed on me, why "Wilcow (a gardenera)" should be introduced in the place of "Wilcox, a gardener," who figures in Mr. Gilbert's original, and how the combined efforts of France and Scotland contrived to transform "Jenny Northcote" into "Jenny Morticolti," are secrets only known to the printer and Miss Forbes! I need hardly say that Mr. Gilbert never contemplated such an interval as is suggested above, but had merely arranged for the lapse of thirty years between the first and second acts.

The performance was eminently successful, and we made a handsome profit for the "little sisters." Mrs. James played excellently, and was particularly good in the second act—a rather uncommon occurrence with most people who appear in this charming little play. There was the same objection to my playing Spreadbrow that there was to Mr. Tracy Tupman going to the Fancy Dress Reception "in a green velvet jacket with a two-inch tail"—I was "too old and too fat"; but there was no one else to do it, and I got through all right, while Mrs. Willie made a great hit.

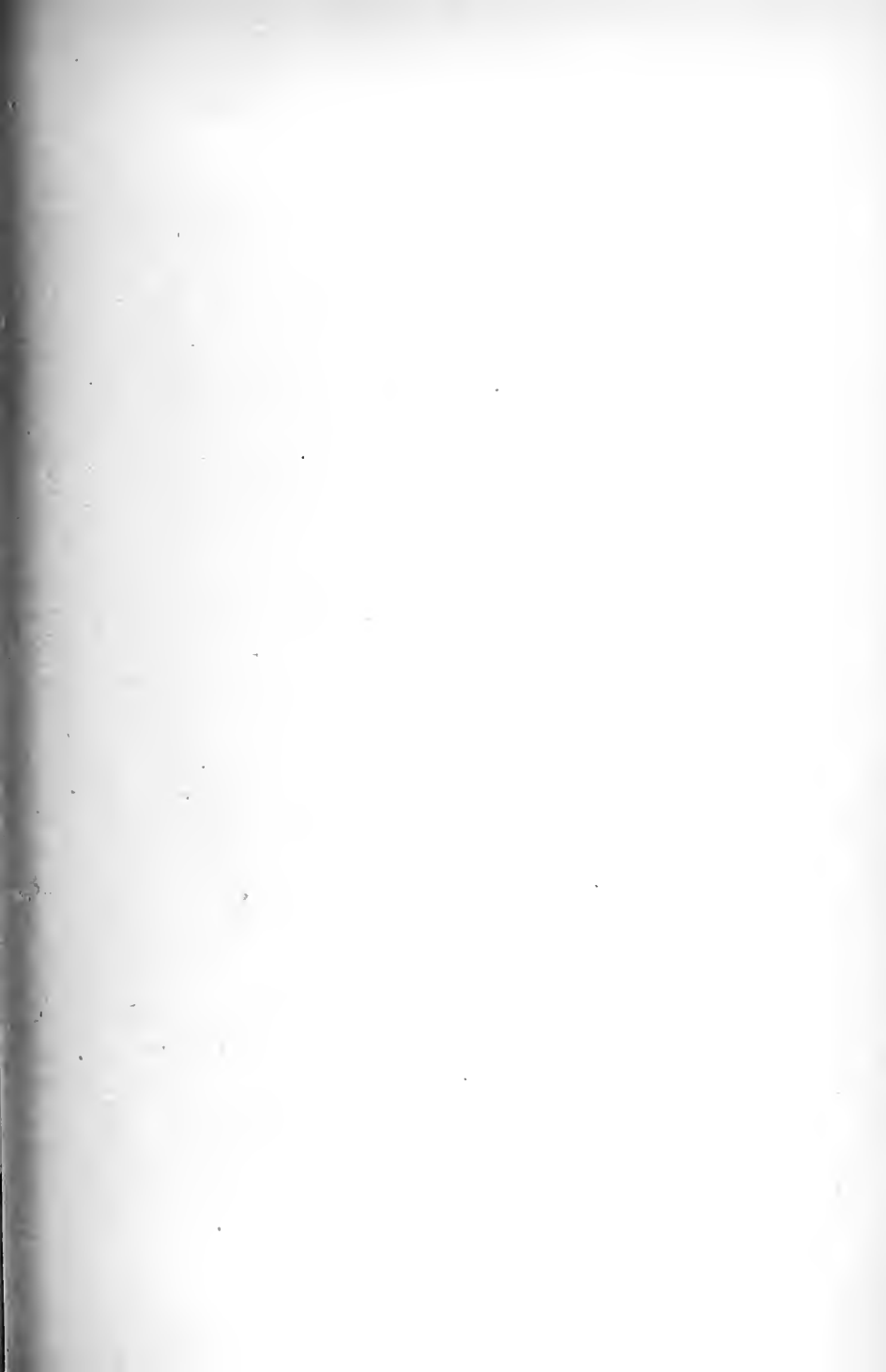
Of all the clever ladies I have acted with in country houses, I consider Mrs. Charles Crutchley, Mrs. William James, and Miss Muriel Wilson quite at the top of the tree. There are many other clever actresses in the amateur ranks, but these three, each in different ways, possess something which to an actress is beyond price—a distinct style and individuality of their own. Is there anything so distressing to watch as an amateur actress (or for the matter of that, a professional one) giving an earnest, slavish, but inaccurate imitation of a great artist in some part that her personality has made peculiarly her own? If the imitation is bad, the result is a dead failure; and even when it is good, it only causes us to regret the absence of the great original. Mrs. Crutchley's performances are not merely recollections of our leading actresses. Her voice is flexible and sweet, and though not very powerful, is capable of many intonations; in pathetic scenes she produces a little sort of tearless sob, which is extremely effective, and perfectly original. Her comedy is not really so good, in my humble opinion, as her pathos, and I have no very vivid recollection of anything but her dancing in the Guards' Burlesque, which I believe my friend

George Nugent has already done honour to in another part of this volume ; but given a part to suit her, there are few actresses, amateur or professional, who command the sympathies of an audience so completely as Mrs. Charles Crutchley.

Mrs. Willie James has not had Mrs. Crutchley's experience, but, considering the little she has acted, her success is really remarkable. She is an admirable mimic, and one of the few instances of a mimic achieving success on the stage. Both she and Mrs. Crutchley played Mrs. Boswell in my little play, " Dr. Johnson " (afterwards produced at the Strand), and it is in no spirit of dissatisfaction with the professional ladies that I speak, when I say that the part was never so well rendered in London as it was at Dover and West Dean. Mrs. James, though a most painstaking rehearser, will never accept instructions from the stage-manager without receiving chapter and verse for the various movements and " business " required. It is not enough for her to know that " they always did it like that in London ! " She wants to know the " why " and " wherefore," and that is why her performances are always intelligent and interesting, though occasionally lack of experience will prevent her making an effect which she has carefully planned and practised. Her acting last year at Chatsworth, in a sketch called a " Backward Child," was a wonderfully clever bit of work.

What I suffered on that occasion I shall not readily forget. The playlet in question is a short dialogue between a governess and an overgrown tomboy—" one of those small misguided creatures who, though their intellects are dim, are one too many for their teachers." I had seen Mrs. James act it with her sister, and had offered to play the Governess for her at some future time, but

had later decided not to do so, as I have an uncontrollable antipathy to "female impersonators." But Mrs. James's acting as the Schoolgirl had got talked about, and one "off" night, when Miss Muriel Wilson and Count Mensdorff were going to do a dualogue, "La Souri" (and very well they did it), Mrs. James came to me and said the Prince of Wales had asked her to act something with me to lengthen the programme. I got into my corsets and skirts—I hadn't any petticoats (an omission that was remarked on audibly from the front of the house)—feeling very uncomfortable. If there had been none but strangers in front I wouldn't have cared, but you don't want people you know to see you make a fool of yourself; and I'll wager my soul that nothing makes a healthy-minded man feel so helplessly idiotic as a pair of stays and a skirt. By good luck, however, the audience laughed till they cried, and the whole piece went splendidly. Mrs. James's make-up for this part was one of the most extraordinary transformations that I have ever seen, and her method of attaining it simplicity itself. She put on a child's frock and let down her hair, and lo! time stood still, and she looked fourteen again. Two days later we played "His Little Dodge," and the Prince, taking the greatest interest in the *corps dramatique*, attended several rehearsals, and on more than one occasion H.R.H. made suggestions as to action and business that were of the greatest assistance. The last of my trio, Miss Muriel Wilson, makes every bit as effective a picture on the stage as she does off—which is rather an uncommon coincident, for, as a rule, a really pretty girl is seen to far greater advantage in the light of day than in the glare of our old-fashioned and barbarous footlights. Of her natural talent as an actress there can be no doubt. She





MISS MURIEL WILSON.

From a photograph.

has a manner and method completely her own, and her movements are wonderfully easy and graceful. I have seen her play many parts, and only once remember her unsuccessful. That was a couple of years ago at Tranby Croft, when she good-naturedly consented to act Lady Pettigrew in the "Parvenu." It wasn't that she didn't understand the words; it wasn't that she couldn't speak the lines; it was merely because it was simply impossible to make her look like a faded old woman of sixty! We put on her a grey wig, and she looked like a young girl "whose hair had gone white in a single night," as tradition and the *Family Herald* would have you believe. We tried her in a red wig. She looked rather younger than she did in her own hair. We "painted her face and tired her hair" in twenty different ways, but not a suspicion of Jezebel appeared. Charles Colnaghi confessed himself beaten. Tuplin, the Clarkson of Hull, was in despair. "I can do nowt wi' er," he confessed despondently; but I encouraged him to fresh efforts, and he tried again. This time he interlaced Miss Muriel's face with heavy Indian ink wrinkles and crow's-feet of richest sepia, but it was useless. Her bright eyes and fresh cheeks peeped out from behind his handiwork, like the face of a fair prisoner behind a grating, and Tuplin, the artist, was beat.

Miss Wilson's acting in "Kitty Clive" was certainly one of the cleverest things that the amateur stage has ever seen; and though I personally prefer her in "Mrs. Hilary Regrets," her delivery of the big speech in "Kitty" (which Miss Irene Vanbrugh, the creator of the part, has often assured me is a most trying ordeal) showed exceptional thought and ability.

Talking of "Mrs. Hilary" reminds me of a rather amusing theatrical "sell" which we were enabled to play off

on some of "our kind friends in front." At the end of this play, when Dr. Power has succeeded in getting rid of all the unwelcome guests by the somewhat unconvincing expedient of telling them that they will be thirteen at dinner, he timidly avows his love for the fascinating widow, and the following dialogue ensues :—

Mrs. Hilary (softly). Why don't you call me Blanche.

Power (passionately). I'll call ye Blanche till your black in the face.

Now it occurred to me that if my fair companion would alter her line and say, "Why don't you call me Muri—" and stop, covered with bashful confusion, that the compromising nature of the slip would call forth much unholy joy on the other side of the footlights, and we should have the satisfaction on ours of knowing that the clever people in front had been sold.

Mrs. Hilary aided and abetted me in my criminal design, and the roar of ribald laughter that went up as she begged me to call her "Muri," and hurriedly hid her face in her hands, was a sound never to be forgotten. Luckily two or three others were in the joke, or we should never have succeeded in persuading the scoffers in the audience that they had been "taken on."

I am afraid this paper is resolving itself into an "appreciation" of three clever and attractive women, and that I am not treating my subject with the solemnity and respect due to the present high position of Amateur Dramatic Art. But really it is difficult to be solemn when our thoughts wander back into past theatrical experiences. The days that were so successfully satirised in "The Pantomime Rehearsal" are passed ; indeed, I always thought the fun a little out of date even when this clever entertainment was first produced. In my

theatrical experience, extending over a period of thirteen years, I have never seen a member of an amateur company throw down his or her part and refuse to act. But I have seen it done at a rehearsal on the professional stage! I have never heard an amateur author grind his teeth and swear volubly before the ladies of the cast, but I heard a professional author do that only a few days since. Wild horses shall not drag from me his name, but I heard him do it all the same. On the whole, I think we amateur artistes are rather a maligned lot. It is not necessary for a man to be a hopeless muff before he takes to acting. I hear such stories of our self-esteem, our airs and graces, of the jealousies and tantrums of the ladies, of the conceit and bad temper of the men.

But is there much authority for such rumours? I know several amateur actors who do not fancy themselves endowed with the tragic power of Sir Henry Irving or the comedy of dear old Mr. Toole. They play cricket, and shoot, and golf, and hunt, and come down to ten o'clock breakfast quite clean and fresh, just like any one else. They do not tell disparaging stories of each other, or give you reminiscences of how "they knock 'em at Derby," or talk about "floats" or "flies" or "backings" or "Tee pieces" or "borders"; oh no! they go on just like ordinary mortals, and you might spend a week with them before you discovered that they ever did any acting at all. I am told that there are others, earnest students of their art, whose behaviour is quite the reverse of what I describe; but I flee from these as I would from the plague, and know little of their manners and customs except by hearsay. I am also fortunate to number among my acquaintances several ladies who can act together without desiring each other's immediate death

or humiliation, and who would, even if you filled their tea-cups with vitriol, carefully abstain from throwing a drop! I do not expect these statements to be believed; I know how useless it is to combat popular opinion. I do not say these things expecting to make converts, but merely to ease my conscience.

In the choice of plays and the method of mounting them, country-house theatricals have made enormous strides during the last few years. We seldom hear now of "Money" or "The Lady of Lyons" being played on a stage eight feet by six; and yet my dear old friend Sam Brandram has often assured me that such performances were of frequent occurrence in the late sixties and early seventies. On these occasions history tells us that both the costumes and the scenery were made at home, and the actors and actresses, who were also invariably local products, frequently made their first appearance on any stage in one of these standard works. But a close examination of old newspaper cuttings leads me to believe that our fathers and mothers caused the local press the same mild quiescent satisfaction, that is all we succeed in exciting with all the gorgeous scenery and correct dresses of modern times. I cannot help thinking though that the "Lady of Lyons," on a stage eight feet by six feet, with home-made dresses and rudimentary scenery, must have been indescribably funny, and that we show our good sense nowadays when we confine ourselves to dualogues and three-part pieces for the drawing-room, and leave the more ambitious efforts for the Corn Exchange or Town Hall. Of course in very large houses such as Chatsworth, Craig-y-Nos, West Dean, or Tranby Croft, where you have perfect bijou theatres fitted with electric light, with scenery painted by excellent artists,

where you can get night and morning effects, and where properties and furniture are of the best, the amateur is in clover, and really gets a fair chance of showing what he can do. If with all these assistants to his art he cannot make a hit before one of those friendly audiences, let him give up acting and take to manly sports—say spillikins or dominoes.

In concluding these fugitive notes and recollections, my thoughts naturally turn towards many friends with whom I have been associated in country house performances. Of these the professional stage claims many—Arthur Bouchier, Allan Aynesworth, Holman Clark, "Scrobbie" Ponsonby, and Rosslyn were all amateurs in my time. Alan Mackinnon, Jeffcock, George Nugent, and Dick Bromley-Davenport still remain on the side of the angels—I mean the amateurs. And there was one—a greater than any of these, who has made his final exit and last appearance on this or any other stage—my dear friend Charlie Colnaghi. Poor little Charlie! he was the best all-round actor that I ever saw, and the most faithful comrade a man ever had. He was, as was said of the greatest actor of all time, "An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man"; and if his death did not "eclipse the gaiety of nations," there was many a country house made sadder by his loss, and one at least in which the memory of his sweet, gentle personality will never pass away.

XIV

THE CANTERBURY "OLD STAGERS"

By W. YARDLEY

APOLOGIA

BY way of preface, I venture the remark that I honestly doubt if any of my colleagues engaged on the collaboration and compilation of this immortal work have had a more hopelessly impossible task than that which I undertook in a moment of greater amiability than prudence.

I am compelled by force of circumstances to endeavour to work a miracle, a species of conjuring trick that has apparently become impossible of accomplishment in these matter-of-fact days. To put the case as briefly as possible, I have practically undertaken to pour out a magnum into a half-pint glass, a feat which I have hitherto never seen performed satisfactorily by anybody, unless perhaps by the consumer, if not especially thirsty.

In short, I have been obliged to try to place on record the doings of the oldest and most celebrated body of amateur actors, established in the year 1842, and extending to the present year of grace, 1898, within the comparatively (if not extremely) narrow limits of some forty pages of print—more or less.

It is obvious that I have attempted an impossibility,

for no approach to justice towards the splendid work of such an unique *coterie* of amateur actors as the world-renowned body of "Old Stagers" could be done in a space of lesser limits than could be afforded by this entire volume of amateur records.

Even then I doubt if substantial justice could be done to the subject in such narrow confines ; but I must leave it at that, or my "apology" for the foolhardiness of my undertaking must perforce outrun, in proportion, the all too meagre details to which I have had the temerity to boil down the overwhelming stock at my disposal.

THE ORIGINAL INCEPTION OF "O. S."

In the year 1841 a notable cricket match was played at Canterbury between Kent and England, on the 10th of August and two following days, on the ground of the East Kent Cricket Club, known as the "Beverley" Ground, in which match England proved victorious by scoring 163 and 56 to Kent's 114 and 31.

This was a return duel to one which occurred previously in the same year at Lord's Cricket Ground, on which occasion Kent had proved the victor over England by 54 and 91, against the adversaries' 31 and 44.

The stakes, according to the historians of that period, were for a thousand guineas (presumably five hundred guineas a side), the sort of thing we have not been in the habit of experiencing within this latter half of the century, in which honour and glory appear to be sufficient incentive to cricketers, without the introduction of the money element. But I fancy the majority of those large stakes were "only on paper."

So great a success attended the match at the Beverley

Ground, Canterbury, when close on 5000 spectators were present, that the brothers John and W. de Chair Baker, who had the interests of Kent cricket deeply at heart, consulted the Hon. Frederick Ponsonby (subsequently the Earl of Bessborough) as to the possibility of establishing an annual meeting at Canterbury, with the pleasant object in view of combining cricket by day with theatricals at night.

This evidently suited the views of the Hon. F. Ponsonby, who was celebrated, even in those comparatively early days, for his love of the drama and his histrionic prowess as an amateur, for he promptly gathered around him a remarkably strong "posse" of amateur actors with whom he had been most successfully associated erstwhile, and the autumn of 1842 inaugurated the establishment of the "Old Stagers," whose performances have continued at Canterbury with unbroken success up to the present time.

THE CONSTITUTION OF "O. S."

As a matter of fact the "Old Stagers" were not constituted as such until the tenth year of their appearance at Canterbury. No doubt the innate modesty of all amateur actors militated against their styling themselves "Old Stagers" until their existence had run into double figures, but to all intents and purposes "O. S." actually sprang into existence in 1842.

It must be remembered that at the outset of their career the originators of "O. S." were in the main cricketers, who devoted themselves indefatigably to the game during the day, and found comparatively little time for rehearsals. Scenes were rehearsed in corners of the cricket field or in the dressing tent, at any odd moments that were available. Nothing but the inde-

fatigable energy of youth, combined with an intense love for theatricals, could have kept the ball a-rolling when once started.

The following are the Rules of the "Old Stagers," with the various alterations that have been made in them from time to time :—

RULES OF THE "OLD STAGERS"

At a Meeting of the Old Stagers held at the Fountain Hotel, Canterbury, on August the 19th, 1850, the following revised Rules were agreed to :—

RULE I.

That the Club shall consist of twenty-five actual Members, and that no person shall be eligible for Election until his second ¹ (consecutive) attendance at a Canterbury Season, provided he shall have been present twice in the course of four years.

RULE II.

That any Member absenting himself from the August Annual Meeting for three consecutive years shall be placed on the list of Absentthree Members, but ² that on again attending, he shall be reinstated as an actual Member at the first vacancy.

RULE III.

That the Club-Room be reserved for Old Stagers only, and that no Stranger be therein admitted, unless his name, with that of five actual Members, be entered in the Visitors' Book.

RULE IV.

That the Books and Archives of the Old Stagers be entrusted to the care of the Hon. S. Ponsonby.

¹ The word "consecutive" added at a Meeting of "Old Stagers," August 15, 1862.

² The words after "but" ordered to be struck out, and the following words inserted in their place—"shall not thereby forfeit any of the privileges of Old Stagers."

RULE V.

That a Candidate for Election must be proposed, seconded, and unanimously elected at a Meeting of no less than seven actual Members, during the Annual gathering.

August 15, 1860.

RULE VI.

That a Musical Foundation be erected and affiliated to Old Stagers, subject to the Rules of the Society, to which the Members of the Band shall after the usual two years' attendance be eligible.

The Musical Old Stagers shall possess all the Rights and Privileges of the Society, with the exception of that of voting on the Election of actual Members, or on the alteration of the Rules of the Society.

The number of the Musical Old Stagers is to be limited to ten.

August 15, 1862.

The word "consecutive" was ordered to be added to Rule I. as to eligibility of Candidate.

August 11, 1869.

The following alteration of Rule II. was carried: "That the words after 'but' be struck out, and the following words inserted in their place—'shall not thereby forfeit any of the Privileges of Old Stagers.'"

August 1880.

With reference to Rule I., it was ruled, that although a person may have been present at two consecutive Canterbury Seasons, he was not eligible unless present at the present Season.

August 3, 1887.

Resolved: That in view of the numbers of actual Members of Old Stagers who have retired from active service at Canterbury, excepting with the knife and fork, a Shelf be provided for actual Members who may volunteer to repose thereon, and who shall not thereby forfeit the Privileges of Old Stagerdom.

By no means the least interesting feature in connection with the "Old Stagers" is the following list of "Noms de

Théâtre" adopted at various times by all who have been in any way connected with the Club itself :—

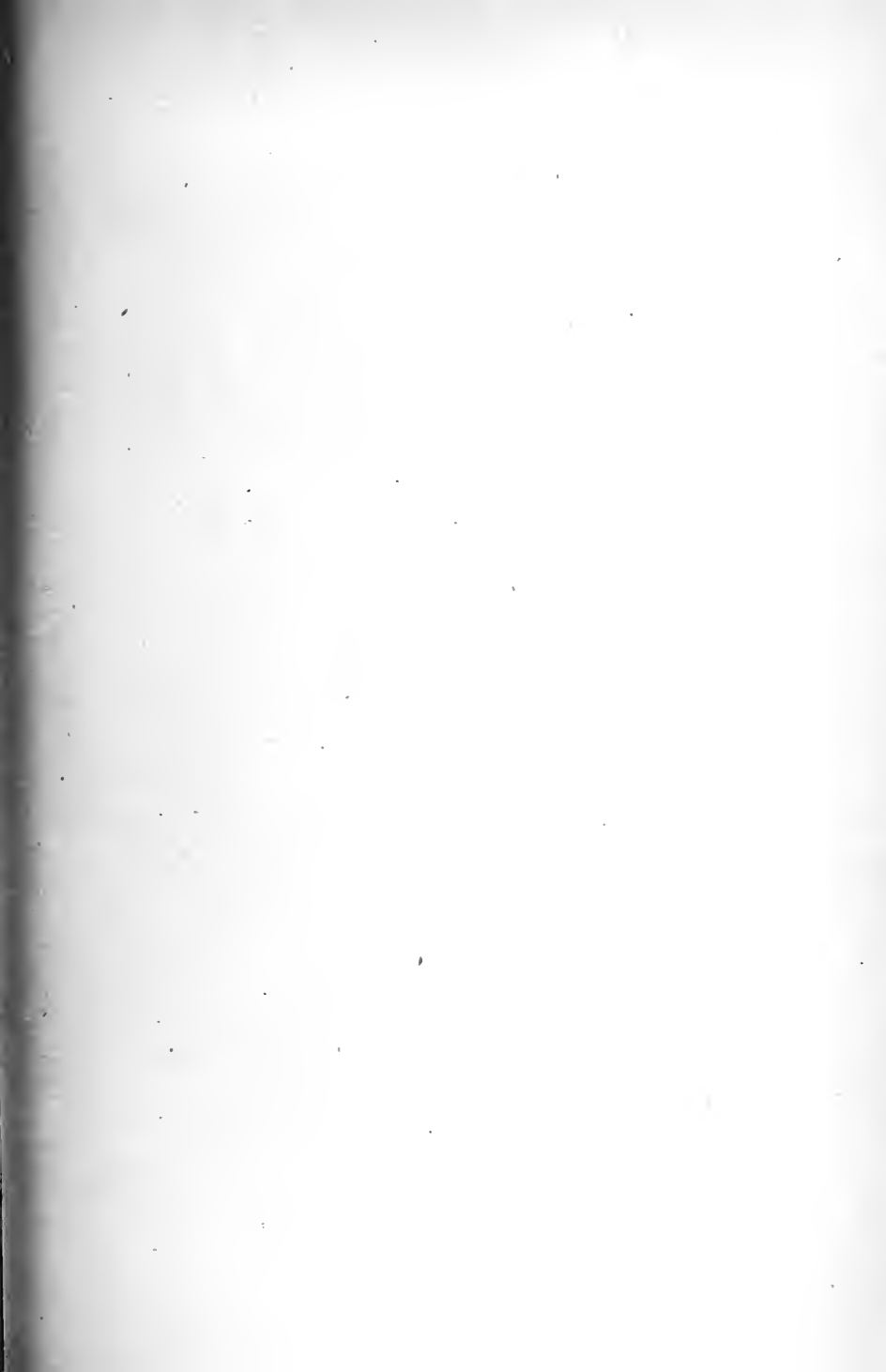
"NOMS DE THÉÂTRE" USED AT CANTERBURY

O. S. PERFORMANCES

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Adolphus, O. | A. K. Oom | Deceased. |
| Archer, Capt. | W. P. Bolland | Deceased. |
| Banjo, Benjamin | Sir A. Webster. | |
| Barchester, Alington | C. Trollope. | |
| Baddun, Reglar | Col. J. Goodden. | |
| Bartey, W. | A. B. Mitford | { Now Freeman Mitford. |
| Benfiglio, Signor | L. Benson. | |
| Biffin, R. W. | R. W. Keate | Deceased. |
| Biddulph, H. E. | B. Butler. | |
| Bœuf, Baron de | A. Bouchier. | |
| Brooke, Lord H. | W. P. Bolland | Deceased. |
| Brun, Monsieur le | Bruno Holmes. | |
| Burley, E. | E. Balfour | Deceased. |
| Balsamo di Anizzidi | H. D. Stewart Powell. | |
| Centreson, Head | B. C. Stephenson. | |
| Cade, Lowther R. | J. W. Lowther. | |
| Charles, S. | C. Seymour | { Deceased. |
| Conway, Sir G. | C. Seymour | |
| Cokeupon, Mr. | Hon. A. Lyttelton. | |
| Courtley, W. | W. Yardley. | |
| Cultor, Horty | H. Gardner | { Now Rt. Hon. Lord Burghclere. |
| Cropland, Sir C. | C. Ellison | |
| Curls, C. | H. Fellows. | |
| Cuthbert, C. | C. Ellison | Deceased. |
| Chancellor | W. E. Goschen. | |
| Checquers | W. E. Goschen. | |
| Dalby, E. | E. H. Hartopp. | |
| Dalby, W. | W. Hartopp | Deceased. |
| Deede, Acton | W. H. Leese. | |
| Dilly, Sir Daffydown | W. M. Rose. | |
| Doe, Sir J. | G. C. Bentinck | { Afterwards Rt. Hon.; deceased. |
| Doe, Sir F. | F. C. Bentinck. | |
| Eagle, The Gt. Bald | Hon. R. Grimston | { Deceased. |
| Eagle, Sir Solomon | Hon. R. Grimston | |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| Edwards, E. | Hon. E. C. Leigh. | |
| Esrom, Count and Countess | C. R. Morse | Deceased. |
| Evans, E. | E. E. Hartopp. | |
| Evans, W. | W. Hartopp | Deceased. |
| Eyot, L. | W. G. Elliot. | |
| Farkins, Fredo | A. Farquhar. | |
| Felice, Sig. R. S. V. P. . | N. Wanostroght . . } | Deceased. |
| Felix, N. | N. Wanostroght . . } | |
| Fogg, Dodson | W. Fladgate. | |
| George, P. | George Ponsonby . . | Deceased. |
| Gentiluomo, Sig. Nuovo . | G. Nugent. | |
| Goodlittle, Gustavus . . | A. Ricardo. | |
| Graves, Paul | Palgrave Simpson . . | Deceased. |
| Gurney, Gilbert | Hon. and Rev. J. Leigh. | |
| Gucini, Capitano | A. Gooch | Deceased. |
| Guernsey, G. de | G. du Maurier | Deceased. |
| Hardinge, H. | H. Stracey. | |
| Hall, Hams, | Hon. J. Adderley. | |
| Heavysides, H. | H. Fellows. | |
| Hoe, Haigh | W. H. Hay. | |
| Hopper, Clod | Claud Ponsonby. | |
| Hozier, E. V. E. | Mercer Adam. | |
| Jacques, J. | J. H. Ponsonby. | |
| Jardineros, Don das. . . | Dundas Gardiner. | |
| Justocorpo, Signor . . . | N. Wanostroght . . | Deceased. |
| Knox, Hon. T. | T. K. Holmes | Deceased. |
| Knox, John, jun. | Q. Twiss. | |
| Kitts, Newton | K. Pemberton | Deceased. |
| Lane, Lincoln | S. Brandram | Deceased. |
| Lafite, Monsieur | H. S. Ponsonby. | |
| Lilytop | G. R. Ponsonby. . . . | Deceased. |
| Littlejohn, John | J. Bidwell | Deceased. |
| Lively, Sir Deadly | C. R. Morse | Deceased. |
| Lorraine, J. | J. L. Baldwin | Deceased. |
| Lovelace, Hon. E. | Hon. E. C. Leigh. | |
| MacUsquebaugh | C. Drummond. | |
| MacFingon | A. Mackinnon. | |
| Meerschbaum, Herr | F. Clay | Deceased. |
| Mecum, Wade | A. Wade. | |
| Michael, B. | M. G. Bruce | Deceased. |
| Montagu, Aug. | A. Spalding. | |
| Naghi, Col. | C. P. Colnaghi | Deceased. |
| Noakes, John | Tom Taylor | Deceased. |
| Nuneham, de | Col. Newnham-Davis. | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| O'Howl, The | J. C. O'Dowd. | |
| Olde, Lawrence | Sir W. Young. | |
| Oldjohn, John | J. Bidwell | Deceased. |
| Ost, Twiliver | Q. Twiss. | |
| Pippin, Ribstone | K. Pemberton | } Deceased. |
| Peachie, K. | K. Pemberton | |
| Pearson, F. | Hon. F. Ponsonby | } Late Earl of Bess- borough. |
| Perceval, H. | Gen. Sir H. P. de Bathe. | |
| Phitz | R. A. FitzGerald | Deceased. |
| Pootra, Brahma | E. Hartopp. | |
| Podger, E. | E. Tredcroft | Deceased. |
| Quintin, F. | Q. Twiss. | |
| Ready, Capt. R.N. | Hon. F. Ponsonby | } Late Earl of Bess- borough. |
| Richards, A. | A. Ricardo. | |
| Rind, C. | C. Peel | Deceased. |
| Roe, Hon. R. | Hon. F. Ponsonby | } Late Earl of Bess- borough. |
| Roper, Bell | A. J. Tassel. | |
| St. Gomm, Motcomb | E. H. Whitmore. | |
| Sawe, C. E. | C. C. Clarke. | |
| Sauvage, Frère | W. Wilde. | |
| Schrymper, M. de | F. H. Whympers | Deceased. |
| Scrobbs, Herr | Eustace Ponsonby. | |
| Sharp, A. | A. Cecil Blunt | Deceased. |
| Smith, Promiscuous | A. Wigan | Deceased. |
| Storer, Herr Rea | J. Allen | Deceased. |
| Smith Family | { Every one employed on Stage. | |
| Twist, Oliver | Q. Twiss. | |
| Tyme, Mr. Mark | G. Nugent. | |
| Tyme, Mr. Beat | Claud Nugent. | |
| Viret, Semper | H. Vernon | Deceased. |
| Villars, Chepstow | T. G. Cooper. | |
| Waggs, C. | C. Weguelin | } Deceased. |
| Wiggs or Wiggins, C. | C. Weguelin | |
| Whitehead, Hon. S. | Hon. S. Ponsonby | } Now Sir S. Pon- sonby-Fane. |
| Williams, Mathew | W. Mathews. | |
| Windsor, Gobelins de | J. B. Westropp. | |
| Wright, Hall | Sir C. Hall. | |
| Wye, W. | W. Yardley. | |
| Wobbles, Colley | E. Balfour | Deceased. |
| Young, John J. | J. Bidwell | Deceased. |





MR. AUGUSTUS SPALDING.

From a photograph by Barraud.

between "old time" and "up to date" methods, both in anecdotism and journalism.

Augustus M. Spalding told me, when the late Tom Taylor played in "The Wreck Ashore" he conceived that a great effect might be obtained at the end of the play (when he had to be shot), if he were to crush a mulberry upon his forehead to give the appearance of a suddenly received wound. He accordingly carried throughout the piece a mulberry nestling in the palm of his hand. He completely ruined the dresses of the ladies with whom he had to act, and when, at the end of the play, the cue was given for the shot, the call-boy or property man was not at his post; the shot was not fired, so Mr. Addison, the stage manager, rang down the curtain without giving Tom Taylor legitimate opportunity to crush the crimson berry on his brow. He poured forth a torrent of abuse, at which Mr. Addison grew angry. Tom Taylor seized Spalding's arm and walked off, exclaiming, "Bah! Addison doesn't understand Canterbury!"

Spalding on one occasion played a practical joke on the late George Bentinck. At the conclusion of some performance, Spalding advanced, insisted upon breaking the rules of the "Old Stagers" (which expressly forbid the making of speeches), delivered a long panegyric on the rare qualities of Bentinck, and finally presented him with a cup that had been until that moment concealed by a napkin. It turned out to be a china mug, with "A Present for a Good Boy" written upon it in gold letters. No one enjoyed the joke less than George Bentinck.

In one of the Canterbury epilogues a crocodile had to appear upon the stage. The part was cast and re-cast several times. The representative of the firm of Nathan strove hard to obtain reliable information as to by whom

the part would be ultimately played. Apparently he was misinformed, for when on the night Spalding (who was finally entrusted with the rôle) called to Nathan's man, and said, "Where the devil is my crocodile's dress?" the attendant burst into beads of perspiration, and exclaimed, "Gracious goodness, Mr. Spalding! we've had the crocodile cut down for Mr. Twiss!"

In "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," in the year 1885, Jim Dalton and Melter Moss after Act i. do not reappear until the middle of Act iii., an interval of an hour and a half. J. D. has a different costume and make-up in each of the three Acts in which he appears. The theatre being very hot, the actor who played Jim Dalton thought it would freshen him up were he to get into his own clothes and get some fresh air outside for a portion of the interval. As he was passing through the green-room on his way out, Melter Moss, who was unable to remove his make-up, owing to the time occupied in adjusting his Jew's false nose, jealously asked J. D., "Where the d-d—! are you going?" and when told, was moved to anger, being compelled to remain in the theatre all the time. In the fourth Act (the public-house scene), where he has to utter a strong denunciatory speech, his nose partially gave way and wobbled. This tickled the audience; the Jew got nervous, and the speech went for nothing. (Jim Dalton was played by Q. Twiss, and Melter Moss by Gooch.)

In this same scene the navvies were played by some men from the barracks, led by Arthur Bouchier, who was astonished, when he came on, to find at the table eight instead of six navvies, the number which had been present at rehearsal. The two new navvies being realistic artists, at once proceeded to show their conception of

their characters by making use of some of the most emphatic language possible, of course only audible on the stage. Bouchier, being in charge of the navvies, and supposing the "supers" to be two of the men requisitioned for that purpose from the barracks, threatened to report them for their misconduct to their superior officer, which threat was received by them with jeers, none the less effective because they were delivered with apparently additional emphasis in a telling undertone. The "navvies" in question incontinently bolted downstairs as soon as the scene was over. The undaunted Bouchier, however, pursued them with alacrity, and discovered, to his chagrin in the first place, and ultimately to his amusement, that they were two of the very most prominent of the very elder members of "O. S.," whose names could not be torn from me with red-hot pincers.

I forget whether it was at Canterbury, but I rather think it was—and anyway the anecdote will excuse itself I fancy—that dear old Palgrave Simpson, who was nothing if not realistic both in conception and execution, came to the final rehearsal, and casting his eagle eye over the scene, exclaimed in accents of unfeigned horror, "*What! WHAT! WHAT! Gracious goodness! Lor' a'mighty! Here we are supposed to be starving, and the blithering idiot of a scene-painter has painted a ham and pickles on the back-cloth!*"

Another anecdote relating to Palgrave, on the same lines somewhat as that previously related about Tom Taylor, is quite as authentic. He also had the conception of realistic effect by the timely use of a ripe mulberry, and had got a lovely specimen of the fruit awaiting him on his dressing-table. When in need of it he entered his dressing-room just in time to catch his best of friends,

Jack Clayton, *eating it!!!* Tableau! Swear words, &c., &c.

There was a very amusing episode in one of the comparatively latter-day epilogues, when young Freddy Bentinck, made up excellently as an old grumpy spectator, caused a sensation by objecting to the supposed loss of the script of the epilogue, which was found on his person by a policeman (bogus, of course), played by Claude Ponsonby. Quintin Twiss conceived a humorous notion which he speedily carried into execution, for he requisitioned a *real* policeman to actually arrest young Bentinck when he had been thrown out of the theatre by the sham "bobby," and it was not without a considerable deal of dubiousness on the part of the "Simon Pure" in the shape of the local guardian of the peace that Bentinck escaped from acquaintance with the interior of the "lock-up."

A little tale about Morse, who was known as "The Chevalier Esrom." He was playing in the farce "Grimshaw, Bagshaw, and Bradshaw." The extent of his rôle was to appear at the finish and exclaim, "I'm Bradshaw!" With the re-Morse-less-ness for which he was famous, he must needs ejaculate, "I'm *Bag*-shaw!" But he was not that individual, as Twiss explained to the puzzled audience in lieu of Maddison Morton's ordinary "tag." Morse was always disappointing if not wrong.

On one occasion, in the course of some piece, Tom Taylor got off one of his practical jokes upon Hartopp, who had to drink a draught "without heel-taps" to show the glass was empty. As is frequently the case at other amateur shows besides those of the "Old Stagers," there was nothing ready for Hartopp. Tom Taylor, more than equal to the occasion, found a pewter containing,

of all horrible drinks, the dregs of porter. To these he added the thickish contents of an ink-bottle. "Topp" Hartopp, who was nothing if not an artist (on the stage at all events), polished off the contents of the tankard without turning a hair, and before he could make a wry face Tom Taylor ejaculated with consummate gusto, "See how he enjoys the exhilarating fluid!"

In 1886 several London managers who had come down to Canterbury "came on" in the club scene in "Cyril's Success." Amongst them were Charles Wyndham and Edgar Bruce. The former, despite his elaborate "make-up," was sure of recognition by the audience. Naturally, some one, whose name must not be mentioned, suggested an idea to E. B. Norman, who was the stage manager that year, to arrange matters so that Our Best Light Comedian should be placed on the stage all the time with his back to the audience. The situation had at all events the pleasure of variety for Charles Wyndham.

THE SOCIABILITY OF "O. S."

I doubt if any club in the world ever could hold a candle to the "O. S." for sociality and sociability. Such fun as always existed in the many amusing episodes that occurred in days gone by, concerning the performances, is not a patch upon the fun that exists now, and has existed far more exuberantly and exhilaratingly in the past, in the "Old Stager" Rooms at the far-famed Fountain Hotel.

I shall never forget my first introduction to that mystic palace of delight. The Friday night when that terrible bugbear "The Epilogue!!!" has been scrambled through, and the throes, agonies, apologies, congratula-

tions, appreciations, and (very seldom) condemnations have been given, received, believed, or doubted, as the case may be, has always proved the brightest spot in the brightest week of the season.

After a plain but substantial supper comes the real fun of the week. On the occasion to which I refer I had the honour of being introduced as a guest (many years before I had the further honour of becoming a full-fledged "O. S.," *in propria personâ*), by my old friend and school-fellow of now over forty years' standing, Cecil Clay.

His brother, Fred Clay, one of the most eminent of our English composers, had produced during that week "The Bold Recruit," of which he had written the music to the lyrics of B. C. Stephenson, a subsequent friend and collaborator of mine. What fun we had, to be sure! Songs, imitations, recitations (not long, but full of wit and pith), and everything to make us jolly and happy.

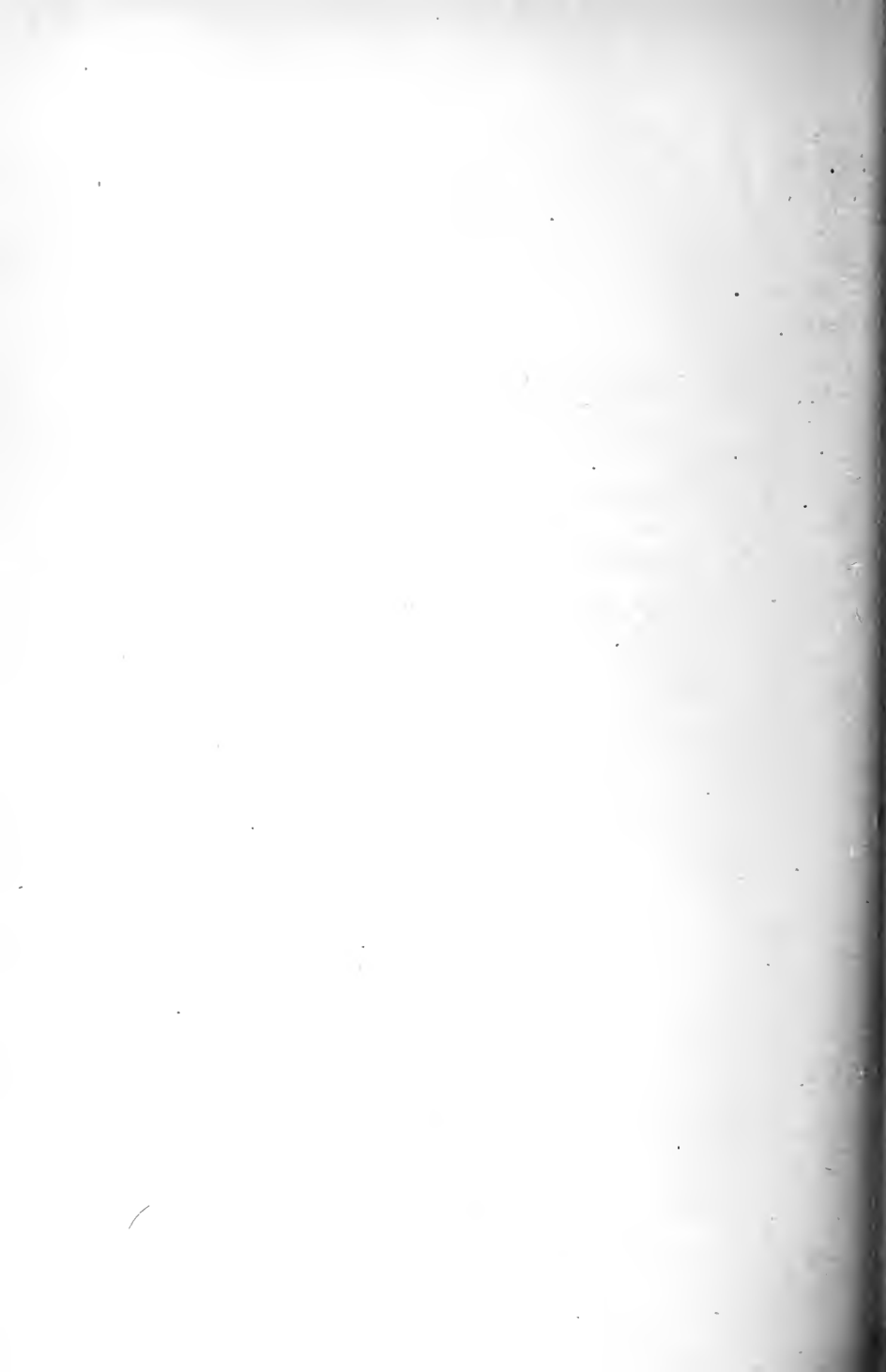
And the fun on *that* Friday night! "William Tell" was the subject of the "extempore." Well I remember it. My old dead and gone friend, Captain Alfred Thompson, stage-managed the "impromptu," and right well was it done. With Freddy Clay and Arthur Sullivan at the piano no greater treat could be imagined. Why don't we live for ever, all of us, and have annual recurrences of such delights?

The next year brought Canterbury its *chef-d'œuvre*, the immortal "Cox and Box," founded upon the already vigorous "Box and Cox" of Maddison Morton, but rendered now imperishable to fame with the happy lyrics of F. C. Burnand, and the deathless music of Arthur Sullivan. The latter came down to manipulate the harmonium, and



SIR SPENCER PONSONBY-FANE, GEN. SIR HENRY DE BATHIE, AND MR. QUINTIN TWISS, AS COX,
SERGEANT BOUNCER, AND BOX, IN "COX AND BOX."

From a water-colour.



dear old Freddy to "spank the joanna," and a more perfect accompaniment to any light musical piece could not be conceived or executed.

"There are others" (as the Comedy Merchant says in the piece somewhere) also. Poor Charlie Colnaghi and "Scrobby" Ponsonby have done most artistic and amusing pleasantries there.

Has not Charlie Clarke shown himself equally adept at light finger work with watches and banjo-strings?

In fact, what talent, including the inimitable imitations of Tom Cooper, has not been seen in the "Old Stager" Rooms during the Canterbury Week, on the part of amateurs, and even of the brightest and best of professionals, who have at various times been the welcome guests of the "Old Stagers."

To give full justice where it is due; to make so much even as a mild attempt at recognition of the talents of the very flower of amateur histrionship, that has been the leading feature of the Canterbury "Old Stagers," would prove to be the proverbial work of supererogation of "painting the lily or gilding refined gold."

RECORDS OF "OLD STAGERS"

The foregoing words indicate, or *ought* to indicate, clearly enough that I am absolutely unequal to the herculean task of recording the unapproachable deeds of the "Old Stagers" with anything in the neighbourhood of real justice.

I therefore take shelter behind a bare skeleton record of their work, which is one of which any body of individuals with their souls in a set purpose may well be proud, if not even vain.

1842

PLAYS

"The Rivals," "The Poor Gentleman," "Too Late for Dinner,"
and "Othello Travestie."

PERFORMERS

H. Ellison, Tom Taylor, M. Bruce, C. G. Taylor, C. Bentinck, Captain
Baker, Hon. S. Ponsonby, T. Thackeray.
Mrs. Nisbett, Miss J. Mordaunt, Miss Engeham, Miss Williams.

A Prologue and Epilogue were both written, as well as
spoken, by Tom Taylor.

1843

PLAYS

"The Critic," "Othello Travestie," "Bombastes Furioso," "A Roland
for an Oliver," and "High Life below Stairs."

PERFORMERS

C. Ellison, R. Keate, Tom Taylor, Capt. Archer, J. L. Baldwin, W. de
St. Croix, M. G. Bruce, Hon. F. Ponsonby, R. Garth, E. Hartopp,
E. Bayley, Hon. S. Ponsonby, T. Wythe.
Miss Sidney, Mrs. Tayleure, Mrs. Walter Lacy.

1844

PLAYS

"The Haunted Inn," "Sylvester Daggerwood," "Two in the Morning,"
"The Rent Day," "Shocking Events," "Esmeralda."

PERFORMERS

G. C. Bentinck, Tom Taylor, E. Hartopp, Hon. S. Ponsonby, R. W.
Keate, E. Dewing, H. Brown, Hon. F. Ponsonby, Count Esrom,
Lord H. Brooke, C. Randolph, C. Wilson, C. G. Taylor.
Miss J. Mordaunt, Mrs. L. S. Buckingham, Miss Grey, Mrs. Tayleure.

There was a short Prologue by Lord Bessborough.

1845

PLAYS

"The Wreck Ashore," "The Captain of the Watch," "The Beulah Spa,"
"Why did you Die?" "The Original," "Amateurs and Actors."

PERFORMERS

Hon. J. Percival, Sir George Conway, T. Taylor, E. Dewing, T. K.
Holmes, F. Pearson, C. G. Taylor, C. Morse, G. C. Bentinck, Lord
H. Brook, E. Hartopp, H. de Vavasour, F. de Burgh, J. George.
Miss Pearson, Miss Mordaunt, Miss Binns, Mrs. A. Wigan.

A brief Epilogue written by T. Taylor.

1846

PLAYS

"Comfortable Lodgings," "You can't Marry your Grandmother,"
"Kill or Cure," "The Thimble Rig," "The Prisoner of War,"
"The Loan of a Lover," "Twice Killed."

PERFORMERS

R. W. Keate, Hon. Richard Roe, Hon. Claude Lyon, M. G. Bruce, J. L.
Baldwin, E. Hartopp, C. E. Ellison, Sir John Doe (Bart.), E. George,
C. G. Taylor, J. Leslie, W. Pickering, Hon. C. Lyon, E. Morton,
Hon. R. Grimston, F. W. Commerill.

Miss J. Mordaunt, Mrs. A. Wigan, Mrs. Garthwaite, Miss E. Messent.

There is no record of any Prologue or Epilogue.

1847

PLAYS

"The Dream at Sea," "A Match in the Dark," "The Sentinel,"
"Married Life," "The Windmill," "The Carnival Ball."

PERFORMERS

M. G. Bruce, W. Bolland, J. Leslie, John Doe, H. Mansfield, E. Hartopp,
Hon. H. Percival, John Noaks, G. Goodlittle, C. Morse, C. Ellison,
Henry Dove.

Miss J. Mordaunt, Mrs. Garthwaite, Mrs. A. Wigan.

There was an original Epilogue, but its title and the name of the
writer are not recorded.

1848

PLAYS

"Charles XII.," "Why don't she Marry?" "Kill or Cure," "Naval Engagements," "A Day Well Spent," "The Prince and Pedlar."

PERFORMERS

John Noakes, Hon. R. Grimston, Hon. C. Lyon, H. Fellows, C. Cuthbert, A. Mynn, Lord Henry Brooke, John Doe, E. Hartopp, J. Leslie, Hon. Richard Roe, J. Biffin, Hon. H. Percival, C. Morse, J. Loraine, A. Richards, C. Randolph.

Miss Garthwaite, Miss Mordaunt, Mrs. Garthwaite, Mrs. A. Wigan.

Epilogue by T. Taylor.

1849

PLAYS

"Law for Ladies," "X. Y. Z.," "The Beulah Spa," "Robert Macaire," "Turning the Tables," "The Master's Rival."

PERFORMERS

Hon. Thomas Knox, R. W. Biffin, E. Hartopp, Lord H. Brooke, M. Bruce, P. George, Hon. H. Percival, Sir Charles Cropland (Bart.), the Chevalier Esrom, John Noakes, A. Mynn, Hon. R. Roe, Hon. S. Whitehead, John Doe.

Mrs. Caulfield, Mrs. A. Hughes, Mrs. A. Wigan, Miss Mordaunt.

Epilogue by O. Adolphus.

1850

PLAYS

"Killed, Wounded, and Missing," "The Follies of a Night," "Fighting by Proxy," "Pleasant Dreams," "Used Up," "The Bengal Tiger," "The Unfinished Gentleman."

PERFORMERS

O. Adolphus, E. Evans, Sir Charles Cropland, Hon. R. Roe, Chevalier Esrom, Hon. S. Whitehead, S. Charles, Hon. H. Percival, J. Noakes, O. Smith, A. Mynn, J. Loraine.

Miss Engeham, Miss Mordaunt, Mrs. Caulfield, Mrs. A. Wigan, Miss Marston.

Epilogue written by J. Noakes.

1851

PLAYS

"Hearts are Trumps," "John Dobbs," "Deaf as a Post," "Not a bad Judge," "A Nabob for an Hour," "The Lottery Ticket."

PERFORMERS

Hon. S. Whitehead, Hon. Richard Roe, John Doe, Sir Charles Cropland, J. Noakes, E. Evans, H. Percival, T. Knox, Chevalier Esrom, A. Mynn, J. Loraine.

Mrs. A. Wigan, Mrs. Caulfield, Miss Cathcart, Miss Marston.

Epilogue written by T. Taylor.

1852

PLAYS

"Simpson & Co.," "Raising the Wind," "Comfortable Service," "The Spitalfields Weaver," "Tom Noddy's Secret," "The Mummy."

PERFORMERS

John Doe, Richard Roe, A. Smith, B. Smith, John Noakes, Hon. S. Whitehead.

Miss Jenny Marston, Mrs. Caulfield, Miss Engeham, Miss Leclercq, Mrs. A. Wigan.

An original Epilogue ; writer not recorded.

1853

PLAYS

"Spring Gardens," "A Dream of the Future," "A Trip to Kissengen," "The Bengal Tiger," "Boots at the Fountain."

PERFORMERS

John Noakes, Hon. Richard Roe, Sir Chas. Cropland, Hon. John Doe, Hon. S. Whitehead, A. Mynn, T. Knox, E. Evans, A. Smith, B. Smith, J. B. Loraine.

Mrs. Wigan, Miss Marston, Mrs. Caulfield, Miss Engeham.

Epilogue, "Time Baffled" ; writer not mentioned.

1854

PLAYS

"The Housekeeper," "Handsome is as Handsome Does," "Pleasant Dreams," "Sweetheart and Wives," "Beards or Tails,"
"Barefaced Impostors."

PERFORMERS

The characters were played by the usual performers, and included—
Mrs. Wigan, Mrs. Caulfield, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Elwen
Turner, Miss Marston.

1855

PLAYS

"Helping Hands," "A Desperate Game," "Twice Killed," "Prison and
Palace," "Dr. Dilworth," "The Blighted Being."

PERFORMERS

These were the usual, assisted by the numerous and talented
Smith family.

1856

PLAYS

"Tit for Tat," "Frederick of Prussia," "The Mummy," "The Black
Book," "The Camp at Chobham," "The Widow's Victim."

PERFORMERS

John Doe, Lieutenant-Colonel Percival, Paul Grave, Hon. S. Whitehead,
Hon. S. Ponsonby.
Miss Reynolds, Miss Marston, Mrs. Melford.

1857

PLAYS

"The Follies of a Night," "Betsy Baker," "Burlington Arcade," "The
Prisoner of War," "The Jacobite," "Barefaced Impostor."

PERFORMERS

Hon. S. Whitehead, John Doe, T. Knox, Richard Roe, Paul Grave,
E. Evans, H. Percival, Chevalier Esrom.
Miss Ellen Turner, Miss Milford, Mrs. Keeley, Miss Marston.

1858

PLAYS

"A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing," "Done on both Sides," "The Critic,"
"The Wreck Ashore," "Anything for a Change," "Othello."

PERFORMERS

Tom Taylor, H. Percival, J. Doe, Hon. S. Whitehead, P. Grave, J.
Loraine, E. Evans, Oliver Twist, W. Evans, John Noakes.
Miss Woolgar, Miss Conway, Miss Herbert, and Miss Cottrell.

Epilogue, entitled "Foreign Relations," written by Tom Taylor.

1859

PLAYS

"Prison and Palace," "Whitebait at Greenwich," "A Thumping Legacy,"
"A Dream of the Future," "Ticklish Times," "The Original."

PERFORMERS

Col. de Bathe, John Doe, E. Evans, Hon. S. Ponsonby, Hon. F. Pon-
sonby, J. Loraine, Capt. Hartopp, Hon. R. Roe, Hon. S. Whitehead,
J. Noakes, Paul Grave, T. H. Knox, Oliver Twist, H. Percival, W.
Evans, Baron Munchausen, A. Mynn.

Miss Bulmer, Mrs. Leigh Murray, Miss Marston, Miss Engeham.

Epilogue written by Palgrave Simpson.

1860

PLAYS

"A Bachelor of Arts," "You can't Marry your Grandmother,"
"Shocking Events," "Charles XII.," "To oblige Benson,"
"The Two Bonnycastlees."

PERFORMERS

These are the usual, and include—N. Kitts.

Miss Marston, Miss Leclercq, and Miss Haydon.

1861

PLAYS

"Victims," "Who Speaks First," "Grimshaw, Bagshaw, Bradshaw,"
 "Going to the Bad," "Dearest Mamma."

PERFORMERS

John Doe, J. Noakes, E. Evans, Oliver Twist, H. Percival, Paul Grave,
 N. Kitts, T. Knox, Tom Taylor.
 Miss Carlotta and Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Murray, Miss Selby, Miss
 Smith.

Epilogue written by J. Noakes.

1862

PLAYS

"Our Wife," "Tit for Tat," "Lend me Five Shillings," "A Scrap of Paper,"
 "The Sentinel," "Retained for the Defence."

PERFORMERS

Paul Grave, N. Kitts, Oliver Twist, Hon. R. Roe, W. Dalby, Chevalier
 Esrom, H. Percival, A. Burley, E. Evans, Hon. S. Whitehead, T.
 Knox, John Doe.
 Miss Carlotta and Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Murray, Miss Raynham.

1863

PLAYS

"Taming the Truant," "Tom Noddy's Secret," "The Goose
 with the Golden Eggs," "Ticket-of-Leave Man,"
 "Samuel in Search of Himself."

PERFORMERS

The characters were played by the usual performers, with the exception
 of Hon. S. Whitehead and Richard Roe, who were absent.
 The ladies engaged were Miss Murray, Miss L. Foote, Miss Kate Terry,
 Miss Ellen Terry, Mrs. Selby.

Epilogue written by Tom Taylor.

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1864

PLAYS

"Payable on Demand," "Advice Gratis," "A Regular Fix,"
"Money," "The Illustrious Stranger."

PERFORMERS

J. Noakes, H. Hardinge, O. Twist, J. Doe, H. Percival, T. Knox, Hon. S. Whitehead, N. Kitts, Hon. R. Roe, E. Evans, Lincoln Lane, C. Wiggs, Mons. le de Schrymper, Sir Roger de Coverley, Methuselah Smith.

Mrs. Leigh Murray, Miss Murray, Miss Kate Terry, Miss Gertrude Melvin.

Epilogue, entitled "Intervention," written by Tom Taylor.

1865

PLAYS

"The Attic Story," "A Dream of the Future," "The Loan of a Lover,"
"The Prisoner of War," "Your Life's in Danger," "To Paris
and Back for Five Pounds."

PERFORMERS

W. Dalby, T. Knox, O. Twist, K. Peachie, R. Burley, H. Percival, John Doe, Hon. Richard Roe, E. Evans, C. Rind, Mons. le de Schrymper, Hon. S. Whitehead.

Miss L. Thorne, Miss Cottrell, Miss Ada Dyas, Mrs. Leigh Murray.

Epilogue written by W. Dalby, entitled "The General Election."

1866

PLAYS

"Orange Blossoms," "Nine Points of the Law," "Deaf as a Post,"
"Still Waters Run Deep," "Why did you Die?"
"Urgent Private Affairs."

PERFORMERS

W. Dalby, K. Peachie, O. Twist, Hon. Richard Roe, Mons. de le Schrymper, E. Evans, H. Percival, T. Knox, Hon. S. Whitehead, John Doe, Chevalier Esrom, Mein Herr van Dunk.

Miss Hastings, Miss Farrer, Miss Palmer, Miss Dyas, and Mrs. St. Henry.

1867

PLAYS

"A Charming Woman," "The Cricket Ball," "Whitebait at Greenwich,"
 "My Wife's Second Floor," "Out of Sight," "A Phenomenon
 in a Smock Frock."

PERFORMERS

W. Dalby, C. Waggs, John Doe, Oliver Twist, E. Evans, de Schrymper,
 J. Knox, Hon. R. Roe, Hon. S. Whitehead, H. Percival, Vade
 Mecum, Head Centreson.

Mrs. Leigh Murray, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Duvernay, Miss
 Susan Galton.

Epilogue written by W. Dalby, "Our Illustrious Visitor."

1868

PLAYS

"Meg's Diversion," "Married Life," "A Skilful Practitioner,"
 "The Bold Recruit," "Kill or Cure."

PERFORMERS

W. Dalby, Hon. S. Whitehead, John Doe, A. Montagu, J. Knox, H.
 Percival, M. Jacques, E. Evans, Oliver Twist, Brahma Pootra, A.
 Sharp, W. Evans.

Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Norman, Miss
 Fanny Holland, and Mrs. Stephens.

Epilogue, entitled "Canterbury Races," written by W. Dalby.

1869

PLAYS

"Hearts are Trumps," "On and Off," "The Flying Column,"
 "A Bachelor of Arts," "Ticklish Times," "Box and Cox ; or, The Long-
 lost Brothers."

PERFORMERS

These were the usual, and included Hon. S. Whitehead (playing Mr.
 Cox), Mr. Oliver Twist (playing Mr. Box), Mr. Percival (playing
 Sergt. Bouncer).

Epilogue written by W. Dalby.

1870

PLAYS

"London Assurance," "A Regular Fix," "A Husband to Order,"
"A Blighted Being," "Cox and Box."

PERFORMERS

Hon. R. Roe, W. Dalby, C. Waggs, O. Twist, H. Percival, E. Evans,
T. Knox, A. Smith, Chevalier Esrom, J. Jacques, J. Doe, Hon.
S. Whitehead, Mons. le de Schrymper.

Miss Fanny Addison, Miss Constant Brabant, Miss Marion.

Epilogue, entitled "Eastward Ho !" written by W. Dalby.

1871

PLAYS

"Naval Engagements," "Cool as a Cucumber," "A Thumping Legacy,"
"The Rivals," "Going to the Derby."

PERFORMERS

Lincoln Lane, Augustus Montagu, T. Knox, E. Evans, Chepstow Villars,
Matthew Williams, H. Percival, Hon. R. Roe, Oliver Twist, Hall
Wright, Sir Daffydow Dilly.

Mrs. Leigh Murray, Miss Fanny Brough, Miss Fanny Addison, Miss
Carlotta Addison.

Epilogue written by W. Dalby, entitled "Competitive Examination."

1872

PLAYS

"The Housekeeper," "Anything for a Change," "My Precious Betsy,"
"Duchess of Nothing," "Pleasant Dreams," "Box and Cox."

PERFORMERS

Lincoln Lane, Horty Cultor, Augustus Montagu, Oliver Twist, E. Evans,
Sir Roger de Coverley, Sir Frederick Doe, Mein Herr van Dunk,
T. Knox, J. Jacques, Chevalier Esrom, Hon. S. Whitehead, H.
Percival, John Doe, Hon. R. Roe, Colley Wobbles.

Miss Fanny Addison, Miss Fanny Brough, Miss Maud Haydon, Mrs.
Stephens, the Smith Family.

Epilogue, entitled "Autumn Manceuvres," written by W. Dalby.

1873

PLAYS

"New Men and Old Acres," "Retained for the Defence,"
 "The Rent Day," "Out of Sight."

PERFORMERS

Hon. R. Roe, H. Percival, Sir Frederick Doe, J. Doe, Hon. S. Whitehead, Lincoln Lane, Horty Cultor, Colley Wobbles, Augustus Montagu, Oliver Twist, J. Jacques, T. Knox, E. Evans, Chevalier Esrom, Ripston Pippin, Signor Benfiglio, A. Cecil.
 Miss Fanny Brough, Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Sherrington, Miss Lavis, Miss Marlborough.

Epilogue written by J. Noakes and J. D. Norton.

1874

PLAYS

"War to the Knife," "Tears," "Dearest Mamma," "Little Toddlekins,"
 "The Bengal Tiger," "The Two Bonnycastles."

PERFORMERS

These are the usual, with the addition of Mr. Black Smith and Mr. Brown Smith.

1875

PLAYS

"Tit for Tat," "Lend me Five Shillings," "The Mummy,"
 "Handsome is who Handsome Does," "Advice
 Gratis," "To Paris and Back for £50."

PERFORMERS

Hon. S. Whitehead, Oliver Twist, A. Montagu, E. Evans, Sir F. Doe, W. Evans, W. Courtley, Chepstow Villars, Chevalier Esrom, Jacques, Hon. R. Roe.
 Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss M. Cooper, Miss A. Wilton, Mrs. Leigh Murray.

An Epilogue entitled "Change of Weather," written by Horty Cultor.

1876

PLAYS

"Camilla's Husband," "Tom Noddy's Secret," "A Regular Fix," "You can't Marry your Grandmother," "A Family Failing," "Cox and Box."

PERFORMERS

These were the usual, and, in addition, Mr. Courtley, Mr. Heigh Hoe, Signor Benfiglio.

Epilogue, "Minus a Manager," written by Horty Cultor.

1877

PLAYS

"Who Speaks First," "Meg's Diversion," "Your Life's in Danger," "She Stoops to Conquer," "Tears."

PERFORMERS

These are the usual, and include C. Wags and Sir Deadly Lively.

Epilogue entitled "The South-Eastern Question," written by Horty Cultor and W. Courtley.

1878

PLAYS

"The Goose with the Golden Eggs," "A Husband to Order," "Whitebait at Greenwich," "The Bachelor of Arts," "The Original," "A Party of Pleasure."

PERFORMERS

W. Courtley, Haigh Hoe, W. Evans, T. Knox, Lowther R. Cade, Augustus Montagu, F. Doe, O. Twist, H. Percival, Hon. S. Whitehead, C. C. Sawe, &c.

Mrs. Leigh Murray, Miss Compton, Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Chippendale.

Epilogue¹ entitled "Tempus Fugit ; or, Harlequin and Eighteen Seventy-Eight."

¹ This Epilogue was a reproduction of the Amateur Pantomime Harlequinade with Spalding as Harlequin, Miss Carlotta Addison as Columbine, W. Wye (*i.e.* W. Courtley or W. Yardley) as Clown, T. Knox Holmes as Pantaloon, &c. It proved an enormous success.

1879

PLAYS

"The Prison of War," "The Wedding March," "A Rough Diamond,"
"Monsieur Poirier."

PERFORMERS

Hon. R. Roe, Lincoln Lane, Frederick Doe, Oliver Twist, Augustus
Montague, Signor Benfiglio, Sir Lowther R. Cade, W. Evans,
Chevalier Esrom, E. Evans, T. Knox, Mons. le Brun, C. E. Lawe.
Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Nellie Phillips, Miss Jessie Ryder.

Epilogue entitled "Weather or No," written by W. Courtley.

1880

PLAYS

"Our Bitterest Foe," "A Scrap of Paper," "To Oblige Benson,"
"Lend me Five Shillings," "New Men and Old Acres."

PERFORMERS

W. Courtley, Horty Cultor, A. Montagu, H. Percival, O. Twist, F. Doe,
H. Hoe, T. Knox, E. Evans, L. R. Cade, Cloud Hopper.
Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Measor, Miss Ella Dietz, Mrs. Leigh
Murray, and Mrs. Bernard Beere.

Epilogue, entitled "Manager Redivivus ; or, Dr. Doe's Elixir," written by
Mr. Horty Cultor and Mr. W. Courtley.

1881

PLAYS

"Hester's Mystery," "Tit for Tat," "A Thumping Legacy,"
"The Charming Woman," "Out of Sight."

PERFORMERS

Sir F. Doe (Bart.), Clod Hopper, C. C. Sawe, W. Courtley, Oliver Twist,
Augustus Montagu, E. Evans, A. Cokeupon, John Doe, T. Knox,
H. Percival, Signor Benfiglio, Don das Jardineros, Col. Naghi,
F. Godfrey.

Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Measor.

Epilogue, "The Comet Here," written by Mr. W. Yardley.

1882

PLAYS

"Friends or Foes," "Time will Tell," "If I had £1000 a Year."

PERFORMERS

W. Courtley, A. Montagu, O. Twist, Capitano Guicini, L. Eyot, E. Evans,
T. Knox, C. Hopper, F. Doe, R. Roe, J. Doe.

Miss Florence Gerard, Miss E. Evelyn, Miss Rose Norreys, and Mrs.
Leigh Murray.

Epilogue, entitled "Time Tells," written by W. Courtley.

1883

PLAYS

"The Palace of Truth," "Cousin Zachary," "The Parvenu,"
"To Oblige Benson."

PERFORMERS

O. Twist, Horty Cultor, Colonel Naghi, C. C. Sawe, F. Doe, Capitano
Gucini, Colley Wobbles, T. Knox, E. Evans.

Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Louise Willes, Miss Mary Rorke, Miss
Adela Measor, and Miss Kate Rorke.

An Epilogue entitled "The Parcel Post," by Horty Cultor.

1884

PLAYS

"The Guv'nor," "After Dinner," "Married in Haste,"
"Pleasant Dreams."

PERFORMERS

Frederick Doe, Clod Hopper, Il Capitano Gucini, Col. Naghi, Lowther
R. Cade, Hams Hall, Regglar Baddun, Herr Rea Störer, Herr
Scrobbs, Colley Wobbles, Simon Smith, Oliver Twist, Augustus
Montagu.

Miss Lucy Roche, Miss Fanny Addison, Miss Lily Fane, Mrs.
Copleston.

Epilogue, entitled "Sanitas Sanitatum," written by Mr. Horty Cultor.

1885

PLAYS

"A Lesson in Love," "Betsy Baker," "The Ticket-of-Leave Man."

PERFORMERS

Clod Hopper, Col. Naghi, Augustus Montagu, Il Capitano Gucini, Oliver Twist, Lowther R. Cade, E. Mergency, Herr Scrobbs, Hams Hall, Herr Rea Torrer, The MacUsquebaugh, C. C. Sawe, T. Doe.
Miss May Mellon, Miss Carlotta Addison, Mrs. Cecil Clay, Mrs. Copleston.

Epilogue, entitled "Civil Amenities," written by Frère Sauvage, Esq.

1886

PLAYS

"How Will they Get Out of It?" "Poor Pillicody," "Cyril's Success."

PERFORMERS

Il Capitano Gucini, Augustus Montagu, M. le Baron de Bœuf, The MacFingon, Oliver Twist, Herr Scrobbs, Clod Hopper, The MacUsquebaugh, Lowther R. Cade, Motcomb St. Gomm.
Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Miss Lucy Roche, Miss Chester, the Smith Family.

Epilogue, entitled "Colindia," by Frère Sauvage.

1887

PLAYS

"The Glass of Fashion," "A Regular Fix," "My Friend Jarlet,"
"Daisy Farm."

PERFORMERS

Lowther R. Cade, Clod Hopper, Il Capitano Gucini, The MacFingon, Col. Naghi, The MacUsquebaugh, Motcomb St. Gomm, Herr Scrobbs, Oliver Twist, Augustus Montague, M. le Baron de Bœuf, M. Gobelins de Windsor.
Miss Carlotta Addison, Mrs. Frank Copleston, Miss Adela Measor, Miss Lucy Roche.

Epilogue, entitled "Buffalo Billicosus," written by F. Farquhar.

1888

PLAYS

"Sent to the Tower," "Confusion," "The Area Belle," "Dearer than Life."

PERFORMERS

M. le Baron de Bœuf, Il Capitano Gucini, Signor Nuovo Gentiluomo, Oliver Twist, Motcomb St. Gomm, Herr Scrobbs, The MacUsquebaugh, M. Goblins de Windsor, The Great Scott.

Miss Lizzie Henderson, Miss Ada Houston, Miss Laura Linden, and The Great Bald Eagle and the Smith Family.

Epilogue, "Confusion worse Confounded," written by Fredo Farkins.

1889

PLAYS

"Two Roses," "The Tiger," "Good-bye," "Betsy."

PERFORMERS

John Doe, Oliver Twist, Augustus Montagu, Frederick Doe, Lowther R. Cade, Il Capitano Gucini, Motcomb St. Gomm, Mons. le Baron de Bœuf, The MacUsquebaugh, Signor Nuovo Gentiluomo, The MacFingon, Col. Naghi, Herr Scrobbs, The Great Bald Eagle.

Misses Laura and Marie Linden, Mrs. Frank Copleston, Miss Isabel Ellissen, Miss Ada Sala, and Miss Edith Chester.

Epilogue, "Eiffels and Trifles," by Fredo Farkins.

1890

PLAYS

"My Milliner's Bill," "The Silver Shield," "At Last,"
"The Money Spinner."

PERFORMERS

John Doe, Oliver Twist, Frederick Doe, Chepstow Villars, Herr Scrobbs, Col. Naghi, The MacFingon, The MacUsquebaugh, M. Lafite, Dodson Fogg, The Great Bald Eagle.

Miss Annie Irish, Miss Ethel Norton, Mrs. George Canninge, and Miss Laura Linden.

Epilogue, "Keep it Dark," written by Motcomb St. Gomm.

1891

PLAYS

"In Honour Bound," "The Paper Chase," "A Thumping Legacy,"
 "Nine Points of the Law," "Cox and Box."

PERFORMERS

The Hon. S. Whitehead, H. Percival, Oliver Twist, Augustus Montagu, Il Capitano Gucini, Colonel Naghi, Motcomb St. Gomm, Lincoln Lane, Herr Scrobbs, Dodson Fogg, The MacUsquebaugh, Signor Nuovo Gentiluomo, M. Lafite, Benjamin Banjo, The Great Bald Eagle.

Misses Annie Irish, Mary Ansell, Adah Barton, Carlotta Addison (Mrs. Latrobe).

This was the great jubilee year, the fiftieth anniversary of the original foundation of the "Old Stagers." The attendance was, of course, in the circumstances, unusually large, the list containing no fewer than thirty-seven "Old Stagers," and as many as forty-three guests invited to make themselves free of the "Old Stagers' Rooms, the total number of eighty being a record.

In this year the "Old Stagers" held their annual dinner and celebrated their jubilee at the Café Royal, on Saturday, August 1st, the Saturday before the commencement of the Canterbury Week. This was necessitated by the fact that on the Wednesday of the Canterbury Week the "Old Stagers" were entertained by the Mayor of Canterbury.

There were present at this dinner Lord Bessborough, Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, General Marshall, General Sir Henry de Bathe, Thomas Knox Holmes, J. O'Dowd, J. Lowther, E. Whitmore, C. Drummond, A. F. M. Spalding, Q. Twiss, C. Eccles, C. Ponsonby, C. Colnaghi, E. Ponsonby, Captain Gooch, W. Nicholson, G. Whympers, T. G. Cooper, W. P. Mills, H. Curtis, Arthur Bouchier, N. Cooper, A. Mackinnon, and W. Yardley.

The Epilogue, "A Jubilee Review," which had been entrusted to the last-mentioned, achieved a record for Canterbury Epilogues, for it was not only written and completed, but actually read after the dinner. It also had the advantage of thorough rehearsal, and went as smoothly as could possibly be. This year, in addition to the fact of its being the jubilee, was marked by the sad circumstance of the death of the popular manager of "O. S.," George Cavendish Bentinck.

1892

PLAYS

"The Duchess of Bayswater," "A Show of Hands," "Young Mrs. Winthrop," "The Magistrate."

PERFORMERS

Messrs. Lafite, MacFingon, Benjamin Banjo, Alington Barchester, Dodson Fogg, Oliver Twist, H. Spence, B. Tyme, Hosier, Cucini, Colonel Naghi.

Mesdames Carlotta Addison (Mrs. Latrobe), Ethel Norton, Laura Linden, Leston.

The Epilogue, "A Contested Election," was written by Mark Tyme and A. Doubleyou, with music by B. Tyme.

1893

PLAYS

"Barbara," "The Dancing Master," "On Bail," "The Hobby Horse."

PERFORMERS

Messrs. B. Banjo, MacUsquebaugh, MacFingon, De Guernsey, Barchester, Chancellor X. Checkers, Scrobbs, O. Twist, Dodson Fogg. Mesdames Copleston, May Whitby, Marie Linden, Ethel Norton, Laura Linden, Sarah Smith, and L. von Malachouska.

The Epilogue, "The Great Drought ; a Midsummer Dream of 93," was written by W. Courtley.

1894

PLAYS

"Sixes and Sevens," "Engaged," "Sweet Lavender,"
"Cool as a Cucumber."

PERFORMERS

Messrs. Barchester, Kensington Gore, MacUsquebaugh, O. Twist, B. Banjo, Colonel Naghi, De Nuneham, John Montague, Baron de Bœuf. Mesdames Lizzie Henderson, Annie Webster, Carlotta Addison, Ethel Norton, Rose Nesbitt, Irene Vanbrugh.

The Epilogue, "On Trial," was written by C. Colnaghi and Lieut-Col. Newnham-Davis.

1895

PLAYS

"The Professor," "To Oblige Benson," "Liberty Hall."

PERFORMERS

Messrs. Col. Naghi, Dodson Fogg, MacUsquebaugh, MacFingon, Barchester, Oliver Twist, Lawrence Olde, De Nuneham, St. Claverton.
Mesdames Carlotta Addison, Lizzie Henderson, Aileen O'Brian, Dora de Winton, Ethel Norton.

The Epilogue, "Change of Air," was written by N. and N.
(Naghi and Nuneham).

1896

PLAYS

"My Little Girl," "Hal the Highwayman," "The Passport," "Ours."

PERFORMERS

The same as last year, with also Messrs. Acton Deed, Cyril Edgar, Charles Berkley, H. Biddulph, and Bell Roper.
Mesdames Irene Vanbrugh, Lizzie Henderson, Lena Ashwell, Ethel Norton, and Aileen O'Brian.

The Epilogue, "A Nightmare," by N. and N.
(Naghi and Nuneham).

1897

PLAYS

"That Dreadful Doctor," "Dream Faces," "The Idler,"
"A Pair of Spectacles."

PERFORMERS

Messrs. Oliver Twist, The MacFingon, The MacUsquebaugh, Lawrence Olde, D. Nuneham, K. Gore, Bell Roper, Acton Deed, Hall Magniac, Roland Twist.
Mesdames Carlotta Addison, Irene Vanbrugh, Eveleen Mills, Victoria Addison, Lilian Hingston, Mona K. Oram.

The Epilogue, "1947," was written by W. Courtley and De Nuneham.

1898

PLAYS

"Shades of Night," "Jedbury Junior," "Liberty Hall."

PERFORMERS

Messrs. Oliver Twist, The MacFingon, The MacUsquebaugh, De Nuneham, K. Gore, Bell Roper, Acton Deed, Hall Magniac, Hazard Straight, Alexander Jordan.

Mesdames Copleston, Sybil Carlisle, Mabel Beardsley, Lizzie Henderson, Winifred Fraser.

The Epilogue, "The Canterbury Ring," a parody on "The Nibelungen Ring," was written by W. Courtley.

EPILOGUE

IN due accordance with the original custom of the "Old Stagers," in which days they had "An Apologist," whose duty it was to make polite excuses to the audience upon any pretext, I commenced this article with "An Apologia." It is quite in the fitness of things, then, that I should conclude it with an "Epilogue," for the Epilogue is a firmly-rooted although early established custom at Canterbury.

My present Epilogue will consist of a few words on one or two matters which appear to me to call for special comment on my part, in some cases from the point of view of general interest, and in others more on personal grounds.

I consider, for instance, that a special tribute of recognition is due to Miss Carlotta Addison (Mrs. La Trobe), who has been for so many years identified so intimately with the "Old Stagers" that she virtually, if not indeed actually, has become part and parcel of the club.

"Sarah," by which soubriquet she is affectionately known by "O. S.," appears to have made her first appearance with them in the year 1861, when obviously extremely young, since when, though occasionally absent through force of circumstances, such as engagements of a professional, matrimonial, or domestic nature, she has continued to appear up to and inclusive of the present year. I should imagine that she must have taken part in a considerable majority of the performances given by "O. S." in that number of years. This is a record

which certainly calls for notice, however brief, in any epitome of the deeds of "O. S."

A few words too are due to Mr. C. W. A. Trollope, who for the past consecutive dozen years or thereabouts, has most devotedly and adequately fulfilled the onerous, and at times somewhat thankless, duties of stage manager to the "Old Stagers." I must also add a word of thanks on my own account, to all who have assisted me in my difficult task, and especially to my friends Quintin Twiss and Augustus M. Spalding, in addition to what I have already previously mentioned concerning Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane in that direction.

With regard to the latter, it may be fairly said that he has for many years past been the principal guiding spirit of the "Old Stagers." It is a matter of exceptional and extraordinary interest that he sang a verse of the National Anthem on the night of the opening performance in 1842; and did the same thing at the conclusion of the Epilogue in the Jubilee year 1891! Goodness knows how many times he has assisted in the same way in the intervening years, but certainly remarkably often. He has also invariably suggested the themes and rough ideas of the Epilogue of the past thirty years without a break. These are but very few of the countless methods by which he has so ably and materially assisted "O. S." to its present unique position. His administrative qualities, supreme tact, and unvarying geniality, have alike combined to secure him the admiration and affection of the "Old Stagers" individually and collectively.

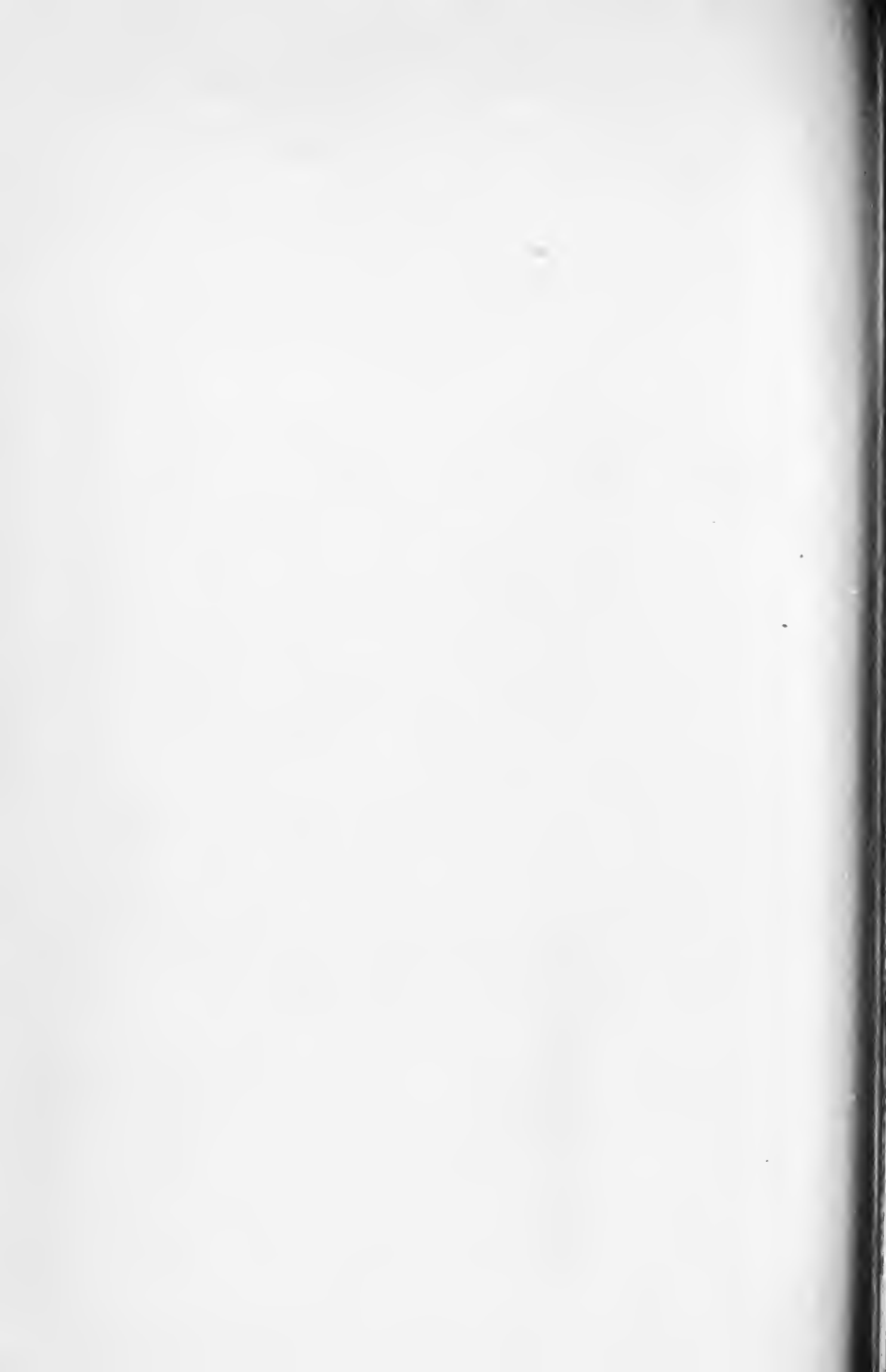
My task—alas! woefully incomplete—would be criminally so were I to quit it without a special reference to the immortal trio who have done so much towards achieving the immortality of Morton, Burnand, and Sullivan's

triumviretta "Cox and Box." No other trio, amateur or professional, has ever approached the Hon. Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, General Sir Henry P. de Bathe, and Mr. Quintin Twiss, as Cox, Bouncer, and Box respectively. Any words of mine in their favour are altogether superfluous.

I have confined myself strictly to "O. S." performances at Canterbury only. Those that have been given elsewhere, especially in the earlier life of the club, are both numerous and interesting, and indeed would form the subject of a pleasant little *brochure* in themselves. They will probably have to wait, however, until the bibliographer shall arise with the patience and perseverance to compile from its massive archives a tome worthy of the complete subject of the "Old Stagers." This is certain to be an accomplished fact one of these days, even if it be deferred till the Jubilee of the centenary of the most celebrated and longest lived Amateur Theatrical Club that has ever existed.

THE END





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